

LIFE OF
SIR EDWARD FITZGERALD LAW

K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.



Sir Theodore Morison, K.C.I.E.
& George T. Hutchinson

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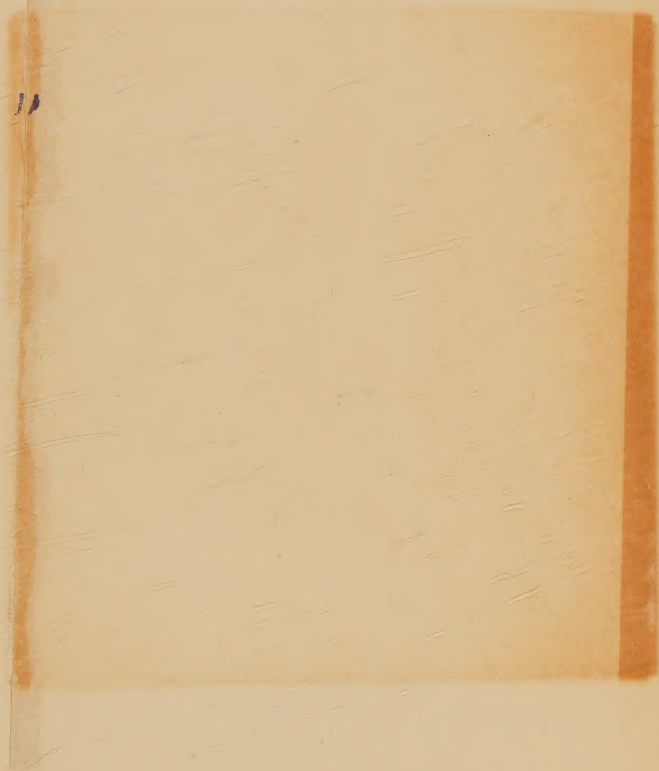
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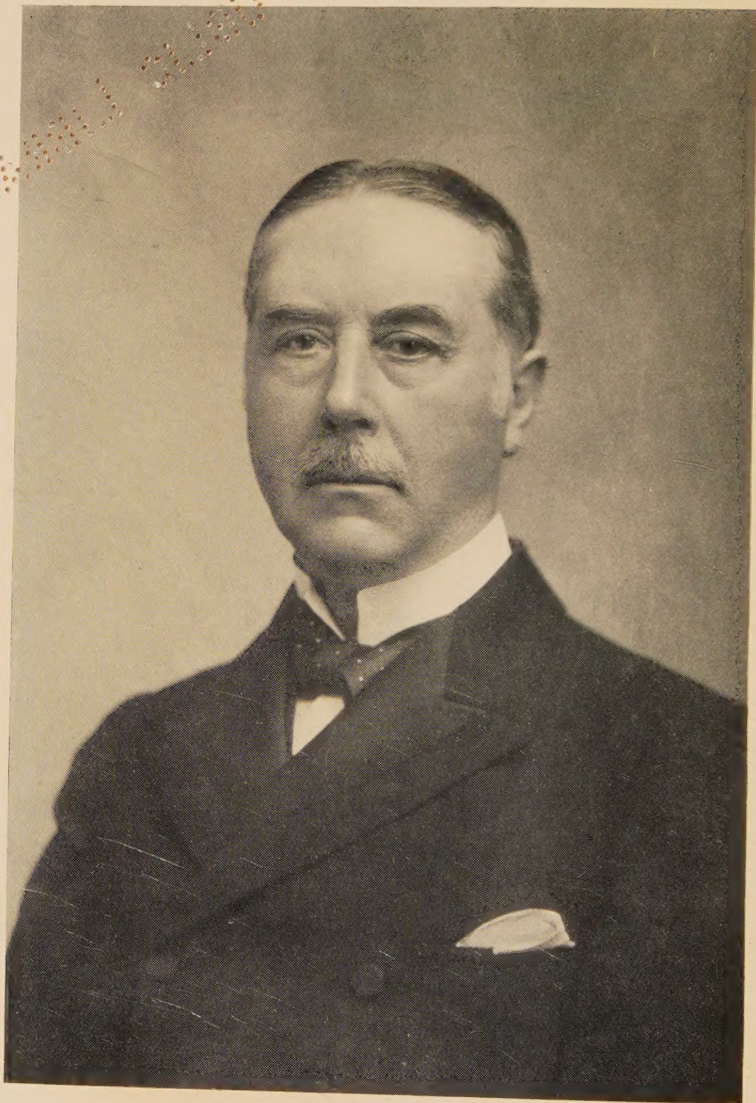


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The Life of
Sir Edward FitzGerald Law

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SIR EDWARD FITZGERALD LAW, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.

1905.

The Life of
Sir Edward FitzGerald Law

K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.

πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἵδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

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AND

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WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

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PREFACE.

IT was in India in the later years of his life that I first met Sir Edward Law, and I immediately conceived for him a warm attachment. When he died I thought that an attempt should be made to give to the world some account of his strong and lovable personality. The idea was taken up, and the result of the willing co-operation of many friends will be found in the following pages. The grateful thanks of the editors are due in the first place to General the Right Hon. Sir Henry Brackenbury, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., Law's oldest and most intimate friend, who supplied us with information upon almost every point of his career. In the preparation of the Russian period we received invaluable assistance from Mr J. F. Baddeley, the gifted author of the 'Conquest of the Caucasus.' To Sir Thomas Raleigh, K.C.S.I., we are greatly indebted for help in preparing the chapters relating to India. Two friends, Sir William Meyer, K.C.I.E., and Mr J. L. Garvin, have contributed separate chapters to the book which add greatly to its permanent value.

Our warm thanks are also due to Miss A. Law, Major-General Sir Ivor Herbert, Bart., C.B., C.M.G., T. M. Morriss, Esq., John Hubbard, Esq., J. Swan, Esq., W. J. Cogswell, Esq., Col. Leslie Ellis, R. Nevill, Esq., and many other friends and connections. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that throughout the preparation of the book we have been in constant communication with Lady Law.

Mr Hutchinson's name and my own appear together on the title-page: the heavy work of examining the documents which Law left behind and reducing this material into an orderly narrative fell upon him; the editorial responsibility rests entirely with me.

THEODORE MORISON.

1st November 1911.

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Sir Edward FitzGerald Law

CHAPTER I.

1846-1882.

EARLY LIFE—INDIA—RUSSIA.

TOWARDS the end of his life Sir Edward Law sometimes spoke of writing his memoirs, and even suggested the title—viz., ‘In Camp and Court.’ A record of his life, from his own pen, would have introduced us to a wonderful gallery of contemporary portraits, and have described an astonishing variety of experience in many countries. But the memoirs were never written, and those who now attempt to fill the gap find in the many-sidedness of Law’s experience their greatest difficulty. No one man is competent to write about Russia, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, India, and the many other countries in which Law’s career was spent, and of whose problems he had special knowledge. The diversity of his experience was not only geographical; it extended to several walks of life which are not usually related to each other. He began life as

a soldier, and to the end of his days retained a keen interest in military affairs; he was a familiar figure in many courts of Europe, and the confidant of several Royal personages; the title which he proposed to give to his memoirs did indicate with precision two aspects of his varied life; but his career had not been limited to camps and courts. Law was also a diplomatist with a rare knowledge of European politics; he was a man of business and a financier; he had sold agricultural machinery in Russia, and managed a telephone company in London; he had helped Greece to free herself of her financial embarrassments, and contributed to the solution of the monetary problems of India. He was, in the best sense of the term, a man of the world, with a wide knowledge of men and things. The tendency of our time is to the exaltation of the specialist, and we are prone to doubt the competence of a man who has not spent his whole career in one environment. Law was a salutary corrective of this rather limited view. It is true that the man of the world can never match the specialist upon his own ground; but the specialist buys his pre-eminence in that single line at a high price; he rarely succeeds in attaining the wide outlook which is needful for men in positions of command, and he is apt to grow narrow and barren from want of that cross-fertilisation which results from handling widely separated classes of ideas. No schooling alone will ever enable us to attain the master wisdom by which we see life steadily and see it whole, but at least it is some help to our defective vision to have seen it from many different angles, and few men had observed it from so many points of view as Law.

Variety of experience, however, is not alone sufficient

to make a man interesting ; the ass that went to Mecca, as the Mohammedans say, returned an ass ; the most dreaded bore is he who is armed with stories of foreign travel. Law would have been interesting if he had never left Ireland, for he had the one attribute of which humanity is never weary—he was intensely human. At first meeting he gave the impression of virile strength ; he asserted his own opinions freely and forcefully, and never hesitated to express dissent ; a rather gruff voice and the stern lines of his face seemed to betoken a resolute and possibly a hard man. Most of us are familiar with the tentative manœuvres which take place at the first meeting of a committee, when the members are groping to find out where strength and weakness lie. Had one encountered Law for the first time on such an occasion, one would soon have come to the conclusion that he was one of the men who was going to count, whoever the rest might be ; if he was to be an opponent, he would be a serious obstacle ; if an ally, then a valuable accession of strength,—either way a force. But after first acquaintance came the delightful surprise that this redoubtable fighter had a great warm heart, which was given with generous unreserve to those who attracted him ; and he was readily attracted, for his sympathies were quick and responsive. We do not habitually think of pugnacity and sympathy as cognate qualities, but in truth they are nearly allied, and were conspicuously united in Law. The reminiscences of his early days included a fragmentary tale of how he and other young hot-heads went about the town at night “taking on” any party that would fight them, and how they once “took on” a company which included several prize-fighters, with disastrous results to themselves. “But that was all part

of the fun," Law would explain to a later generation which is in danger of forgetting that the young male, of whatever species, ought to love a fight. His exuberant vitality never wholly died down, though it was kept under the most severe control. His quick sympathies he retained to the very end; he appeared to come across a larger number of hard cases than the generality of men, for the simple reason that he did not button up his coat and walk on when he heard a tale of distress; he stopped and sifted it and constantly gave what is the busy man's rarest gift, time and thought. His kindliness of heart, as well as his love of a fight, will perhaps be thought the natural attributes of an Irishman. Caution, for all his apparent impetuosity, he also possessed, and Law claimed that it was not so alien to the Irish character as is thought on this side of the Channel. "The Irishman is reckless in speech," he used to say, "but in action he is as cautious as the Scotchman." The quality, however, which most delightfully betrayed his origin was his humour, which was the purest Irish. The quality of Irish humour is unmistakable. If the eighteenth-century saying that "true wit never made any one laugh" were really true, then the Irish humour would be the very antithesis of wit, for it is inseparable from laughter. The Irishman loves uproarious fun, he revels in a ludicrous situation, he pushes a comical fancy to the verge of extravagance, he even enjoys a practical joke in which the witty Scot can see nothing at all amusing. Law loved the boisterous fun of his countrymen, and sometimes puzzled his stolid British friends who complained that "you could never be quite sure whether Law meant what he was saying." The misapprehension was reciprocal, for Law said that he never quite understood

an Englishman. Perhaps it was so ; a man who cannot share our sense of the ridiculous is intellectually an alien, and contrariwise no qualities bring us so close together as sympathy in humour.

Of the tender and protecting love with which he surrounded his wife, it would be profane to say much. When his friends saw Law and his wife together, they realised that his life was illuminated by a purpose which they had not apprehended before ; they became aware that they had come close to a sacred fire. After Law's death, his oldest and most intimate friend was privileged to see a few of his letters to his wife, and declared that as soon as he began reading them he felt he was upon holy ground. On returning them to Lady Law he said : " I realise more than ever what your grief must be ; but what a glorious memory you have to look back upon in that perfect love and trust which is breathed in every line of the letters. I cannot find words to express my sense of the beautiful unselfish devotion to you shown in the letters. I read one or two sentences to my wife which melted her to tears."

To this profound and chivalrous love only a superficial reference will be found in the following pages. A great passion is perhaps the truest index of the potentialities of a man's character, and this biography must be imperfect in that it does not attempt to portray the master-feeling of Law's life. So be it. It is better that a noble character should be imperfectly apprehended than that humanity's holy of holies should be exposed to the irreverence of the crowd.

Edward FitzGerald Law was born on the 2nd of November 1846 at Caraig Bhan, County Down—now known

as Rostrevor House and owned by the Rosses of Bladensburg. Though settled in Ireland, the Laws were of Scottish extraction. They were staunch Protestants; one of them had raised a troop of horse and fought for William of Orange at the Boyne, and they owned land in Derry and Tyrone. Edward Law's grandfather was a partner in Law & Finlay's Bank, and seems to have possessed a special talent for finance. His father, Michael Law, who eventually became senior partner, was compelled by ill-health to close the bank, and though he acted for a time as a Director of the Bank of Ireland, he was ultimately ordered by his doctors to leave Ireland and live in the drier climate of England or the Continent. His mother, a niece of Sir Augustine FitzGerald of Carrigowan, County Clare, belonged to an old South of Ireland family.

His early days afforded every opportunity for the development of a strong personality. Before he was a year old he was taken to Nice, and thenceforward he was never long in one place, and spent much of his childhood with his parents on the Continent. In this way he contrived to pick up a knowledge of foreign languages and foreign nations such as few schoolboys are able to do. His father died before he was twelve years old, and this early loss taught him to be self-reliant, to look forward and plan for himself, qualities which were wisely encouraged by a sympathetic mother. Yet under this self-reliance there always lay a real humility and a diffidence of his own powers; he was often heard to say: "If only I had the brains of So-and-so, how much I could do!"

His first school was at Brighton, where he received a good elementary education and showed some pro-

ficiency in the study of arithmetic. He subsequently went to Mr Hodge's school at St Andrews, where he remained for four years, spending the short Easter holidays with friends of his mother in Scotland. He was rather a delicate boy, and always declared that as the climate of St Andrews did not kill him, it made a man of him. When the time came for him to choose a profession, he decided on the Army, and was in due course sent to be coached by Mr Pritchett, of High House, Old Charlton. One of the masters through whose hands he passed here was a Mr John Morley, whom he was to meet again some forty years later as a leading personality in politics, when he himself was Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council in India.

In 1865, at the age of eighteen, he passed third into Sandhurst, but subsequently passed the entrance examination for Woolwich and entered the Royal Military Academy, where he spent two useful but uneventful years. The workshops at the R.M.A. were an unending source of pleasure to him, and his home letters describe his first attempts to make steamboats and other mechanical contrivances. A year or two later he visited the Paris Exhibition with his family, and spent most of his time among the machinery there, and in examining a new system of lights for lighthouses, in company with a friendly captain in the Royal Engineers.

He was greatly handicapped in his final examination by a severe attack of measles; it was doubtful whether he would be allowed to compete, and he actually wrote his papers in hospital. This decision was arrived at by the authorities in consequence of a petition from the other cadets. Sir George Colley, who was Examiner in Military History, wrote of him: "On Monday I went to

Woolwich and examined the cadets. I was very glad to find that they had allowed young Law to be examined, and if he does as well in other subjects as he did in Military History, he ought to stand a very good chance for the Engineers—his paper was about the 4th or 5th best I got, and as regards intelligence, which I care most for, I should have classed it still higher—nearly the best. I visited him in his little den in hospital and liked what I saw of him, and all the officers seem to speak well of him.” He passed into the Engineers, but was subsequently transferred into the Artillery.

Perhaps the most important result of his two years at the R.M.A. was the friendship which he formed with Captain Brackenbury, now General the Right Hon. Sir Henry Brackenbury, then lecturer on Military History. Law was at once attracted by a man who at the age of thirty had qualified for this difficult and responsible post, but was at the same time wholly human and sympathetic—one who could take the most from life wherever fortune placed him. In later life Law declared that Sir Henry was the greatest man he knew, and was delighted to know that Lord Wolseley shared his opinion. The friendship which sprang up between the two men lasted unbroken through all the chances and changes of forty eventful years.

The more thoughtful side of Law’s character at once responded to the influence of his new friend. At the end of Law’s last term at the R.M.A., Captain Brackenbury proposed to visit the country of the Waterloo campaign with a view to lecturing on the subject in the following term. Law volunteered to accompany him, and at the end of July they both arrived in Belgium. Their way led them first to Fleurus, Blücher’s headquarters, the

scene of Grouchy's brilliant attack, and on by Charleroi to the windmill whence Napoleon is said to have inspected the Prussian position. At Fleurus they found a veteran who still had vivid recollections of the terrors of the great war, and told them how mothers used to thank God when a daughter was born and not a son, to be carried off as soon as or even before he was grown up to fill a place in the Grand Army. He also told of the wounded brought in after the battle, of a Prussian sergeant whom pity prompted his father to conceal, and of the church filled with groaning and mutilated men, and the bodies to be burnt or buried on the next day. It can be guessed that Law learnt much in the course of these long tramps over historic ground—also in a subsequent walking tour with Captain Brackenbury in North Wales. He himself always proved the best of travelling companions, full of energy and interest, and at the same time blest with a spontaneous gaiety which was proof against all the difficulties or discomforts of the road. On the most wearisome day's march in the Low Countries, he was greatly entertained by the efforts of the sturdy little Belgian who carried their modest luggage and indignantly declined all the big Englishman's offers of help "for fear they should think that the Belgians were not strong."

During the remainder of the summer of 1868 he was in Germany and the Tyrol, where he found time to study the German military system and to draw up a scheme for the mobilisation of the British Army; in September he obtained his commission and joined the Royal Artillery at Woolwich. Early in the following year he sailed with his Battery to India. He is described at this time as a tall, spare boy, with a curious severity of ex-

pression, which became more marked in later life, though always contradicted by a pair of kindly eyes.

He spent the three following years in India, where he lived the life of the ordinary subaltern and entered with zest into the many distractions which vary the monotony of soldiering in times of peace. Some recollections published by Mr W. B. Oldham, I.C.S., C.I.E., afford a brief glimpse of these days. The scene is laid in Bengal, in a district famous in the annals of pig-sticking: the occasion, a meeting of the Cantonmentpur Tent Club, an association the *raison d'être* of which was described as "the furtherance of sport and good fellowship." On the evening before the meeting Law arrived at the station, having been appointed "captain" for the day; as such he was responsible for the general arrangements; he had danced at a ball the night before, had been galloping horses since dawn, and in the afternoon had ridden winners in two steeplechases. But nothing daunted, as soon as dinner was over he rode off nine miles in the dark to make final preparations for the following day. Shortly after midnight, loud laughter, howls of pain, and the sound of struggling bodies announced the arrival of the rest of the party, who had been promoting good-fellowship on the journey to such purpose that one of their number was reported to have sustained two broken ribs in the process. With daybreak the disorder increased. Elephants and ponies had gone astray, and a somewhat diminished "field" assembled at the rendezvous. Law worked desperately, riding into the thickest of the grass with the beaters in vain attempts to keep the line and drive a boar into the open. When at last, after hours of pandemonium, something which could be recognised

as a pig broke covert, it was a signal for a wild charge, with endless jostling, shoving, and shouting by jealous riders, for the enthusiasm of the "club" was generally admitted to be ahead of its experience, culminating in a hot wrangle for the honour of first spear round the dead body of a half-grown sow. In the course of the day casualties were numerous and disputes were not infrequent—which the youthful "captain" made heroic efforts to compose. It is said that the meeting broke up in disorder at 3 A.M. at the station, to which the members had galloped in hot haste to catch the early train, having mistaken the rising moon for the dawn.

In 1872 Edward Law was invalided home. During his stay in India he had made considerable inroads upon his modest patrimony; reluctantly he came to the conclusion that his means no longer justified his staying in the army. He weighed the chances, came to a speedy decision, and resigned his commission at the end of the year.

But when this decision had been made, the next step was by no means an easy one. He was an Irish younger son, without influential friends or family connections to help him in England. He had but a small patrimony, and had not received the training necessary to qualify him for any special profession or business. His only assets were his force of character and his knowledge of foreign languages. To such a man there are wider opportunities abroad than at home, and he resolved to go to Russia. A brother-in-law was connected with the Wire Tramways Company, which was erecting overhead cable-ways in that country, and he accepted employment, of a rather precarious nature, under the company without further delay.

Russia in the seventies was still, as far as concerned Western Europe, very little known, and had therefore considerable attractions and possibilities for the enterprising and the adventurous. Until the beginning of the eighteenth century the Grand Duke of Muscovy, to the popular imagination, was an almost mythical personage—a sort of Prester John of the North. Then came the rule of Peter the Great, who drove the Swedes out of the Baltic Provinces, established his capital on the banks of the Neva, and so, in his own words, opened a window whence Russia could look out on to Europe. There followed a century and a half of steady expansion north, west, and south, at the expense of Sweden, Poland, and Turkey—none of which could offer any effective barrier to the advance of the Slavs. From time to time the eyes of the Western Powers were directed anxiously to this advance, and in 1854 the Crimean War gave practical expression to the alarm with which England viewed the repeated attacks of Russia on the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon III., for reasons of his own, joined forces with France's ancient enemy, and, after a struggle lasting two long years, the Allies, thanks to Russia's weakness rather than to their own strength or conduct of the war, triumphed. This result was an unmixed blessing for the Russian people, for whereas victory must have riveted their chains anew, defeat dealt a final and irretrievable blow at the system which had kept them enslaved long after the other peoples of Europe had achieved freedom.

Nicholas I., the splendid embodiment of autocracy, died of a broken heart, leaving peace to be made by his successor, Alexander II., who after the signature

of the Treaty of Paris was free to devote himself to the reforms that had become inevitable. Of these, the first was the emancipation of the serfs. A population of some forty millions of free people was thereby created, and in other directions—mainly in the domain of law and justice—changes of vital importance were made. The campaign in the Crimea had brought home to the Tsar Nicholas the urgent necessity of improved means of transport. On the conclusion of peace the railway system was widely extended, and free Russia, with improved and improving lines of communication, made rapid progress in the path of civilisation, as was soon evidenced by the expansion of trade, both home and foreign.

St Petersburg had been almost from its foundation the seat of a commercial community, comprising as time went on many representatives of foreign merchant houses. Among these the most influential position was won and maintained, up to the period in question, by English firms. But despite the cosmopolitan character of the capital few foreigners had penetrated far into the hinterland, where the rare traveller was continually confronted by unfamiliar difficulties. A railway journey often meant that, after laborious travelling at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, he would be abruptly deposited in some desolate spot, many miles distant from the town whose name appeared on the ticket. At his destination it behoved him to bargain with the innkeeper for the price of a bedroom; having achieved this he would find that sheets, blankets, pillows, towels, and soap were not included, and were only to be obtained, if at all, by further bargaining. If he desired to take the road he must do so in a tarantass, or, still

worse, a telega, springless carts drawn by two or three horses harnessed abreast, and endure the possible dangers and certain discomforts of unmade roads and unsafe bridges, with the cheerless prospect of spending the night at a post-station, where a single room furnished with one or two wooden benches would be the only accommodation provided for the travelling public.

The conditions of life in the country districts at this time resembled those which prevailed in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, and which still survive but little altered in India at the present day. It was perhaps in the organisation of the village that the most striking similarity might have been detected. The affairs of the *mir* or village community were all regulated by the assembly composed of the heads of the households. This body fixed the times for the hay harvest or for ploughing, divided and allotted the common land, and gave or withheld permission to build thereon. It also appointed the different village officials, took the necessary steps in case of drunkenness or idleness on the part of a tenant, and even interfered in domestic difficulties. It made contracts, was jointly responsible for the taxes, and could therefore refuse permission to a peasant to leave the village, or expel him, according to circumstances.

In all this Law recognised the essential features of the system which he had found in operation on the banks of the Ganges. As he got to know the Russian peasants better, he was able to point out that many of their social habits are of Asiatic and not of European origin. The Russian Mujik has the same conception of cleanliness as prevails over all Middle Asia ; he will wash

only in running water, and he views with as much disgust as a Brahman the method of bathing which is usual in the West; his aversion to shaving the hair of the face, and the rude Turkish bath of steam found in most Russian villages, are as obviously of Asiatic origin as the architecture of the Kremlin. The habit of wearing the shirt outside instead of inside the trousers strikes the European traveller with surprise when he first visits Russia, but as he proceeds Eastward he finds the practice universal from St Petersburg to the Great Wall of China. It is not only in social habits of subordinate importance that the affinities of Russia with Asia are shown; they are not less strikingly revealed in her economic and political characteristics. The similarity between the Mir and the Panchayat which governs an Indian village community has already been referred to; and the problem of reconciling a central government with the autonomy of the village which confronts the governors of Russia is one with which Law was to become familiar, at a later stage of his career, in India. The Russian peasant until recently regarded the Tsar with the same superstitious veneration as Asiatic subjects have been in the habit of according to their sovereign; in Russia, as in Asia, devotion to religion and devotion to a personal ruler are blended into one sentiment, which takes the place of patriotism in Western countries. The proportions which the several classes bear to the total population are rather Asiatic than European. The strange cosmopolitan aristocracy of Russia numbers perhaps three-quarters of a million; of the small middle-class the officials are by far the most important element; and below these two are the vast masses of illiterate peasants, who know

of no other occupation than agriculture. These and many other points of similarity justified the expression that was often on Law's lips in later years, that Russia was indeed no part of Europe, but only the most westerly of Asiatic States.

Such was the country in which Law spent the ten following years of his life. On his arrival he proceeded straight to Moscow, to superintend the erection of an overhead wire cable-way at the sugar-works of Messrs Hübner & Company. His ignorance of the language and of the people, and his inexperience of the work which he had undertaken, made his task one of no ordinary difficulty. But it brought out his determination and self-reliance. He worked unceasingly, and never spared himself; fresh obstacles arose every day, only to be brushed aside. He finally succeeded by sheer force of character, and the cable-way was completed.

He then established himself permanently in Moscow, acting as agent for Messrs Roby & Co. and other English firms, for the sale of agricultural machinery. Anything to do with mechanics and agriculture always attracted him. He paid flying visits to some of the best-known manufacturers in England, and attempted to introduce into Russia the most modern form of reapers and binders, steam ploughing and threshing machines, and an improved signalling apparatus for railways. The life was a hard one in many ways. He was always handicapped by the want of adequate capital and of a commercial training, so that he was forced to begin literally at the bottom. Much of his time was spent in travelling through the country districts, visiting the landowners, and attending the

various fairs at which he was likely to obtain orders. He would sometimes relate how on these occasions he would take his coat off and work himself as a mechanic to show off the machinery to some local magnate; but even his fortitude was sorely tried when, as once happened, at the conclusion of a successful deal he was despatched to the pantry to take his meal there.

He was not content with the limited career of a mere agent. He saw the possibilities of various new enterprises in Russia: an improved system of drying grain and hay, cold storage for perishable products, mining concerns in Circassia, the petroleum industry at Baku and Kerch, cement and asphalt,—all in their turn claimed his attention. He considered the possibility of developing the fishing industry on the Volga and the Astrakhan delta of the Caspian, also of utilising the Suanetian forests and the manganese deposits in Circassia. He even approached the authorities at Moscow with proposals for improved water-tanks and drainage, and was among the first to realise the merits of the Cronstadt and St Petersburg canal scheme.

Progress was slow, but gradually he built up a business connection by his sales of agricultural machinery, and in 1876 he entered into partnership with a firm carrying on a similar agency in St Petersburg, Law being entrusted with the business management, the first recognition of his financial ability. But the firm could never command sufficient capital for successful trading, and eventually got into difficulties. Recriminations ensued, and Law found it necessary to bring an action in the High Court of Chancery against the other part-

ners for the recovery of his share of the capital. This was the beginning of his friendship with Mr T. M. Morriss, of the well-known firm of solicitors, Messrs Davidson & Morriss, who was henceforth his trusted adviser in legal and commercial matters. The action was a complicated one, and offered such slight prospects of success that Mr Morriss advised him to abandon it. Law would not hear of doing so, and after long delays, due to the necessity of taking evidence on commission in Russia, he actually recovered some portion of his capital.

But after five years in Russia there was little progress for him to record. It had been uphill work, and failure was perhaps inevitable for a Britisher starting under such conditions. It is true that there were prosperous English firms in the country, but these held an established position, whereas new-comers had to buy their experience. Nor were Law's direct and uncompromising methods in business wholly adapted to Russian commercial life. The Russian merchant's standard of commercial morality is different to that which is recognised in Western Europe. It is said that his primary object is always to overreach the other party, to get the best of the bargain at all costs, and he regards as a good stroke of business what we should consider rather sharp practice. Law led a curious Bohemian life, and made many fast friends among those who sympathised with him in his struggles, and admired his enterprise and grim determination. But as yet he had found no opportunity of showing his ability for finance and organisation, and was scarcely taken seriously by the commercial community.

After the failure of the firm which he had joined, he

accepted an offer of employment from Messrs Hubbard, but the post was not one which offered much scope for ability, rather it provided on assured income for a man of ordinary energy and common-sense. His duties were to develop the business of the firm in the provinces, and collect debts from purchasers of doubtful standing. The work entailed constant travelling, mostly in Poland and the western provinces. Nor was it free from danger: on one occasion he was going with a friend from Mitau to Bauske, in Curland. It was early spring, and the ice was melting in all the rivers, so that when the travellers reached the bank of the river opposite Bauske, though the track over the ice was firm, the river below was free, and above huge masses of ice were piling up. A crowd of wayfarers was standing on the bank afraid to risk the crossing, but the two Englishmen insisted on going over; his friend went on foot, but Law drove across in his cart with the utmost unconcern, and had no sooner reached the other side than the ice broke and was swept away in a raging torrent, from which there could have been no possible escape.

Meanwhile there were other fields in which his mind was employed. Mention has already been made of his turn for mechanical inventions, and it was about this time that he first conceived the idea, developed later, of a machine for setting up type at a distance by the transmission of electric impulses.

Whilst living in St Petersburg at this time he became very intimate with a Russian first cousin, now a general officer in the Russian Army, and this friendship further helped him to understand Russian life and thought. He entered, too, with characteristic keenness into the various forms of sport and amusement whenever he

could spare the time; most Saturday afternoons during the winter found him at the ice-hills, and one evening in the week he generally went to the skating club, then held in Prince Urusoff's gardens, which presented a very bright and gay appearance, lighted up by numbers of Chinese lanterns and the lake crowded with skilful skaters. He sometimes also joined in bear and other shooting expeditions.

But neither business nor pleasure ever interfered with the painstaking kindness which was such a marked trait in his character. Going one evening about this time to a circus, he missed an English clown, whom he had before seen there. On inquiry, he heard the man was ill, and at once interested himself on his behalf. Not content with visiting the poor fellow and sending him beef-tea, &c., he never rested till, with the help of some friends, he had arranged for the invalid to be sent home to the Brompton Hospital; and when after a time the illness terminated fatally, he further exerted himself to obtain for his widow a post as stewardess on one of the steamers plying to St Petersburg.

During the temporary absence of the British Consul in St Petersburg he acted for him, and also became an occasional correspondent for 'The Daily Telegraph.' This was one of the newspapers which was rigorously excluded from Russia by the authorities, and it was essential that the identity of its correspondent should not be known. His contributions to the paper show traces of that pessimism with regard to the affairs of Russia which always characterised his views. At that time, indeed, there were adequate grounds for despondency. Early in 1879, at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War, he wrote that "the general tone of the

Russian Press just now is one of extreme melancholy. The 'Novojé Vremja' and other leading journals openly admit that the two last years have tried the Russians as a nation and found them deficient in most respects. They imagined that the Crimean War had been a severe and not unprofitable lesson, and that a steady course of improvement had brought the institutions and government of their country to something approaching the level of the rest of Europe. But the truth has now been clearly revealed, and to all enlightened Russians it must be a source of bitter disappointment. It is, nevertheless, frankly acknowledged that although much unjust criticism on Russia has found its way into the foreign Press, yet to it alone are the Russians indebted for an accurate knowledge of themselves, and it is exclusively from that quarter that the Russian Press first derived the impetus which has now loosened the tongues of all the leading journals." The war was followed by a disastrous outbreak of plague, which combined with a general dislocation of trade and with bad harvests to produce widespread distress, while increased activity on the part of the Nihilists found expression in political assassinations, incendiarism, and other outrages. The various details were duly recorded in the pages of 'The Daily Telegraph,' whose correspondent also called attention to the corruption and general inefficiency of the administration, and to the injustice shown in the repressive measures adopted, and in the treatment of political prisoners. He pointed out that the latter actually furthered the objects of the agitators, whose aim was to produce a general feeling of uneasiness and discontent. Were a student, who was only playing with revolution, found in possession of Socialist pamphlets,

he would be immediately arrested, and perhaps imprisoned or despatched to Siberia. In any case he became a confirmed revolutionary. The temporary arrest of his relations and friends generally followed as a matter of course. These, too, would become malcontents, and so the circle would be further widened. Whether Law's reasoning was right or wrong, it is indisputable that the gloomy record of outrage steadily increased. As their authors paid the penalty, fresh fanatics arose to take their places, until on March 1/13th, 1881, the world was horrified by the tidings of the assassination of the Tsar Alexander in the streets of his capital.

Law was a close observer, too, of the foreign policy of Russia, and constantly pointed out that her activity in Central Asia was inimical to British interests. "By land or by water," he declared, "Russia is determined to continue to advance towards Afghanistan, and a railway through Persia would undoubtedly afford the quickest means of communication. With Persian forced labour it would cost Russia comparatively little for construction. A railway from the Caucasus to Teheran is truly represented to Persia as being of great importance to herself; but when once a commencement is made Russia, for her own purposes, will push on Eastwards." Her immediate aim was to consolidate her influence in Persia, and to crush the warlike Turkoman tribes on the Russo-Persian frontier, for which purpose an expedition had already been despatched to Merv. About this time from Afghanistan came the news of the massacre at the British residency of Cabul, and rumours of pressure being brought to bear upon Yakoob Khan by Russia, in order to establish an effective control there. If he proved

recalcitrant, Russian subsidies and supplies of arms would be transferred to his rivals, the ever-smouldering discontent fanned in Afghan Turkestan, and the inhabitants of the Herat district reminded that they were of Persian and not of Afghan origin. Persia would be roused once more to claim for herself that fertile Herat province, the desire for the possession of which had been the cause of so many struggles between Persian and Afghan monarchs. It was also significantly pointed out that the power which Russia was acquiring over the lawless Turkoman tribes of the Merv country could be used with those savage nomads, who are ever thirsting for plunder, to impel them to overrun the rich and fair provinces of Western Afghanistan.

Happily the danger was averted. Prompt action on the part of the British Government, and Lord Roberts' brilliant campaign in Afghanistan, restored British influence in Cabul. At the same time the Russian advance on Merv under Lomákin sustained a severe check at Geok Tepe, and her troops were forced to retire to the Caspian. Her fighting General, Skobelev, was then sent (1881) to the scene of hostilities, and the advance resumed; but faulty organisation, the difficulties of transport, and the long lines of communication made progress slow. When at last the Turkoman resistance was crushed and the country occupied as far as Merv, the British position in Central Asia had been secured.

There were other ways, too, in which Law turned his knowledge of the country and its language to account. At this time little was known of Russia in England, and her foreign policy was a constant source of anxiety. Law's special opportunities of acquiring information, his shrewd intelligence, and his early training as a soldier,

sometimes enabled him to give valuable unofficial information on various subjects. One of his travelling companions recalls the great interest which he took in the citadel of Dvinsk (Dünaburg), which was still unfortified, and his investigations as to the strategic advantages of Libau, though the value of the port as a naval base had not then been generally recognised. At this time Lord Dufferin was British Ambassador at St Petersburg, and Law, who was a cousin of Lady Dufferin, was frequently at the Embassy, where "intelligence" such as he was able to supply was always welcome.

It was his excellent knowledge of colloquial Russian that gave Law the opportunity of being present at the trial of the Revolutionaries who had assassinated Alexander II. The Russian Government offered the foreign ambassadors facilities for attending the trial, and Law pointed out to Lord Dufferin that as the Government desired him to do so, they could not refuse him permission to take an interpreter with him. It was in this capacity that Law attended the trial. He used in later days to relate how the prosecuting counsel had attempted to establish that the Nihilist movement was entirely the work of Jews and foreigners, and had created prejudice against the prisoners by representing them as aliens, hostile to Russia. When at last the principal prisoner was allowed to speak in his defence, he threw back his head, and staring straight at the generals and officials who thronged the hall behind the judges, began with the words: "I am a Russian." Law used to say that the conspiracy had been directed by a young woman of good family, who in intelligence and resource was as much superior to her associates as she was in birth. When she was called for her defence, she said that she had but one favour to ask, and that was that

she should not be separated from her brave associates at the moment of death on account of her sex. On the day of the execution Law noticed that the common people showed no sympathy in the young girl's fate; on the contrary, they jeered at the good clothes in which she was dressed when she appeared on the scaffold, saying, "Look at the pretty shoes the lady has put on for the dance" (in the air).

Law liked the members of Messrs Hubbard's firm with whom he was associated, his salary was adequate for his needs, and his work allowed him time for other occupations. But inglorious security had no attractions for him. The conviction that the post could be equally well filled by another man, at a lower salary than he was prepared to accept, decided him to have done with it. Though he had no definite prospect of other employment, he sent in his resignation to the firm in 1882, and practically made up his mind to leave Russia.

He was now in his thirty-sixth year, preparing to make a fresh start at an age at which most men are beginning to reap the fruits of their labours in their different professions. He had come to Russia ten years before with the avowed object of making money. In this respect he had not succeeded, but misfortune only served to stimulate him to renewed efforts, and to suggest fresh schemes to his mind; so that in his case, as sometimes happens, it might be said that in these years he had invested all his capital in himself—all his varied experiences were represented in his character.

On his return to England those who knew him best realised that he had changed. He had become in the most literal sense of the term a man of the world. He had gained something from all the various sections of society with which he had been brought in contact, and

could understand and sympathise with the views of other men and other nations. His capacity for work and power of initiative had developed: at the same time experience had tempered his judgment. As he once remarked, "Above all, haven't I had experience, and learnt to unlearn?"

Outwardly, perhaps, the most lasting mark of these years was a certain hardness and even aggressiveness of manner which concealed from casual observers the very human side of his nature. As a writer in 'The Times' said after his death, "Thanks to a certain brusqueness of manner and an uncompromising energy of utterance, he was throughout his life to a great extent misunderstood; but his friendships, though sometimes long in the making, once made endured to the end. Many, indeed, were repelled from the first, and never came to know the real man—the loss was theirs. Those whose good fortune it was to penetrate the somewhat rugged surface esteemed themselves lucky beyond the common."¹

But the sternness of manner was not wholly superficial. Law was a born fighter, and he took all an Irishman's pleasure in a good fight. He not infrequently complained of the apathy of some of the English colleagues with whom he had to work, "who would not stick up for their opinions," and who had, as he used to say, "to be struck very hard before you could knock fire out of them." The mistake which was not infrequently made was to suppose that Law's readiness to fight was incompatible with tenderness. There is, as has been said before, no such incompatibility, and the warmth of his affections more than equalled his pugnacity. But his set lips and fighting jaw created a vivid impression

¹ 'Times,' 10th November 1908. Letter signed "J. F. B."

on first meeting, and the years of struggle in Russia had set a stamp upon his face which characterised it to the last. A few months before his death a well-known doctor was called in to see him; on leaving, the doctor said to Lady Law, "I thank you so much for having allowed me to see Sir Edward Law. I have seen a man."

One great asset which Law had acquired during his ten years in Russia was a remarkable knowledge of the country as well as of its language and its people. He had studied the latter from every point of view—as a member of the cosmopolitan society of the capital, as a journalist in search of copy, as a British officer in the territory of a possible enemy, and as a commercial traveller in his wandering voyages of exploration through the country districts. The value of this knowledge can only be appreciated if it is remembered how important a factor in European politics Russia was to become in the immediate future.

An epitome of his views on the condition of Russia at this time was published shortly after his return to England in 'The Fortnightly Review,' and attracted considerable attention. In this he pointed out the serious social crisis through which the country was passing as a result of two great events in her domestic history—the abolition of serfdom and the improvement of communications. Only twenty years before the condition of the vast majority of the Russian people had been little removed in all essential details from one of slavery. The domestic serfs could be bought, sold, and beaten by their masters; the land serfs changed hands like the trees or buildings on the estate to which they were attached. Naturally enough the peasant was

ignorant, improvident, and servile; he had no self-reliance, and was accustomed to a state of dependence on others, who ordered the minutest details of his life, and in return for his services saw that he was clothed and fed. He was treated as a child and felt like a child; he bore little ill-will to his masters, for on the whole they were not unkind to him. Their income depended on his labour, and self-interest obliged them to consider to a certain extent his health and welfare. Moreover, the Slav is naturally of a kindly and peaceable disposition, and though there were many terrible exceptions to the rule, masters and serfs generally understood and suited each other.

Then came the edict of emancipation. Europe was astonished by the tranquillity with which so vast a social revolution was carried out; but though the change was so quietly accepted at the time as to diminish its apparent importance, subsequent events speedily gave to it a potent and far-reaching effect. For the growth of a great railway system and the rapid material development of the Empire produced a corresponding revolution in economic conditions, particularly in the North. The earlier awakening in the North was due, partly to contact with the more civilised Germans, Swedes, and other settlers, and partly to the fact that serfs of North Russia were to a great extent serfs not of private proprietors but of the Crown, and as such had been left very much to themselves. The development of industries in the North had also produced a considerable urban population. Large numbers of the peasantry had been brought together and subjected to the enlightening influences of association, of constant contact with

persons of superior education, and of life in a comparatively civilised society. But this process had not been without its disadvantages. Individuals were separated from their families, for longer or shorter periods, and herded together under most demoralising conditions of life. Neither their intellectual nor their moral development had yet reached a point at which it was proof against the corrupt influences of life in great cities.

Other evils were manifest in the country. In the old days the serfs had few troubles or anxieties. The proprietor compelled the communes on his estate to store a supply of grain in good seasons to meet the deficiencies of a bad harvest, and he himself supplied the further capital which was necessary to tide over bad years. Though agricultural methods were primitive, he insisted on a certain amount of order and organisation. He thrashed his serfs if they were drunk too often, and he kept their pockets so empty, and the price of the *vodka*—of which he was the monopolist—so high, that they had comparatively little opportunity of gratifying their passion for liquor. And when emancipation removed this effective, if rough-and-ready control, a free rein was given to the instinctive laziness and improvidence of the peasant, with disastrous results. He showed no inclination to seek a remedy in increased personal exertion or self-restraint, and was tempted to look elsewhere for the causes of his misfortunes and their cure.

Thus it came about that both the urban and rural population offered a fertile field for the dissemination of revolutionary and socialistic doctrines. The people had just attained that stage of development when the

old beliefs are weakening, and there is nothing to replace them, a time when they begin to think for themselves, to develop ideas, and to be affected by a variety of outside influences. In the Balkan campaigns the Russian soldiers learnt that among their immediate neighbours there was a degree of national prosperity unknown in their own country, that there were forms of government other than autocracy under which a peasantry can live and thrive. They heard of a constitution existing in Roumania, and of one being given to Bulgaria. Their impressions on these subjects were generally confused, but they all pointed in one direction, namely, to a shaking of their belief in the necessity or utility of the institutions with which they were acquainted at home. When the soldiers returned, these ideas were widely disseminated. Evidence of their spread was soon afforded by the waning influence of the Church: suspicion was now for the first time cast upon the truth and efficiency of its miracles and ceremonies. The whole fabric of religion, hitherto venerated with superstitious awe, was weakened, and the position of the Tsar, the mystic and sacred head of the National Church, was thereby compromised. A further indication of the same tendency was the beginning of a hostile feeling towards the great proprietors, as holders of land which the peasants never ceased to regard as their own right, and towards the Jews, who had acquired considerable material wealth by the exercise of their innate qualities of sobriety, thrift, and energy, amidst an improvident peasantry.

Law had been brought into frequent and intimate contact with the Jews in the course of his wandering, and the treatment to which they were exposed in Russia

was a subject upon which he always held the strongest views. He pointed out that the legal status of the Jew was that of an alien, even in the limited area to which he was confined. He was not allowed to own land, and he was assumed to be an individual against whose treacherous wiles the authorities must always be on their guard. He had no rights or privileges, except such as had been specially granted to him by Imperial statute, and his enjoyment even of those was precarious. His conduct and occupations were regulated by special legislation, and he must on no account be allowed—so long as he remained true to his faith—to acquire the position of a permanent inhabitant of the country.

Thus a heavy responsibility for the oppression of the Jews rested with the Russian Government. It was said that “the common people reason that if the Government take from the Jews their moral rights, they in turn may ignore their material rights. This is the logic of the peasantry, and it is worked out with thick sticks and stones.”

The Jews themselves were blameless. A wide experience of the Jews in Russia had convinced Law that they were honest, law-abiding citizens, and frequently far more public-spirited than their oppressors. He was equally convinced that the Jews must ultimately prevail. “The experience of ages of persecution had taught them that wealth was the only power which they could acquire and employ with effect, and the necessity of acquiring it had become a part of the creed of the race. Gifted with great energy, and almost always superior in intellect and in traditional civilisation to the nations into whose lands their wanderings had led them, the jealousy of the inferior races had ever failed to crush

them. Legislation, backed by brute force, and by the passions of the populace, had throughout the history of Europe endeavoured to exclude them from all honourable and profitable employments; but thrift, industry, sobriety, and talent had throughout, under the unfailing influence of economical laws, always put money into the pocket of the Jew, and he had ever been in the position to lend or to bribe. The man who can bribe his enemies and make loans to his friends might be disliked and despised, but he could not be completely crushed."

The active agents of revolution in Russia were to be found in the classes next above the peasantry—sons and daughters of priests, of small traders and provincial officials, or of struggling professional men. They were young in years—the average age of executed Nihilists was about twenty-five—and few possessed even a moderate private fortune. Almost invariably they were persons who had sought to improve their social position by education, and whose aspirations had been disappointed because their superficial training had unfitted them for the occupations natural to their own sphere of life, and had not opened to them any higher career. Their numbers were steadily increasing, and repressive measures entirely failed to check the disturbing current.

Law declared that the great difficulty confronting the Russian Government was the fact that the low state of civilisation, and the ignorance of the lower classes, made it essential that reform should be a gradual process, and that sweeping measures should be avoided. Sudden changes would only disturb and confuse the masses. Yet slow progress would never

satisfy the revolutionaries, who would refuse to believe in the sincerity of the Government.

But he discerned no danger of the disruption of the Empire in the avowed revolutionaries at this time. Their theories and actions were beyond the comprehension of the vast mass of the population. So long as the peasants remained passive, revolution would be an impossibility. But their unfortunate economic condition might make them at any moment the tools of the agitators. Unless the Government could avert this by wise measures of reform, and by a judicious alliance with the middle classes, the natural but at this time somewhat apathetic allies of authority, a day might come when the peasantry would join the ranks of the revolutionaries. In the general turmoil which would be produced, the various races ruled by the Tsar would shift for themselves, and the sequel might prove to be the disintegration of the Empire.

Law dealt with this side of the question in an article published a year later in 'The Quarterly Review,' entitled "The Races of European Russia." In Europe generally, and more especially in England, it was seldom realised that a considerable part of the population of "Holy Russia" was of the Mohammedan religion. Law described in detail the various nationalities which were to be found within the geographical boundaries of Russia in Europe, pointing out that in the East there were Bashkirs, Khirgiz, Voguls, Kal-mucks, the different Circassian tribes and the Tartars, all purely Asiatic in their customs and habits of life, many of them Mohammedans. Their individual importance might be small, but in a crisis they would certainly take the fullest advantage of any momentary

license, and would probably be found in alliance with those who might appear strong enough, even temporarily, to overthrow existing authority. In the North the Finns might be considered loyal subjects of their Russian Grand Duke, so long as they were allowed to preserve their national religion, manners, and customs with something fairly approaching a national government, and did not find their prosperity affected by the internal disorders in Russia or a too adventurous foreign policy. "But," he added, "should the Russian Government be so ill-advised as to interfere with their liberties, or should Russian revolutionary commotions or foreign wars affect their material welfare, they would not be slow to express their discontent, and to defend their interests in the last resort, even by force of arms." In the West were Lithuanians, Germans, Poles, and further South the Moldavians and other minor tribes. Thus the Russian people were encircled by a deep fringe of foreign nationalities, each of which had been conquered in its turn and held in subjection to the ruling race by virtue of superior numbers and the central position which it occupied. But even so, the conquerors were neither homogeneous nor united, for the Great Russians, the White Russians, and the Little Russians formed three distinct and important divisions. "Whatever in other respects may be the might of Russia," he wrote, "she is certainly wanting in that great element of national strength, internal unity and agreement. The army and the autocratic power are the only elements of cohesion, and the latter is becoming ever more dependent upon the former. The army is a homogeneous whole. Differences of nationality as of class are lost in that huge, grey-coated

mass, and it is daily becoming more evident that he who can rule the army can alone rule Russia. . . . The extraordinary importance of the army leads to some very serious reflections as regards the future of the Russian Empire. If a policy too ambitious and restless should be pursued, Russia may yet encounter a Sedan ; and then who can estimate the extent of the consequences? Not only would the position of the Government and the dynasty be most critical, but the very existence of the Empire might be found to be endangered. If the throne be shaken, the army demoralised, and the nation convulsed, what force is to hold together these heterogeneous nationalities, races, and peoples? ”

More than twenty years have passed since these pages were written, yet the two articles buried in forgotten back numbers may well be re-read in the light of subsequent events. Law lived to hear of the disastrous warfare in the Far East, of rebellion among the foreign nationalities in European Russia, the outbreak of revolution in St Petersburg, and the establishment of representative institutions in the place of autocracy. He formed hopes of a real revolution, that might destroy the last vestige of a system which appeared to him responsible for all evil in Russia. But the vastness of the country, the want of communications, and the absence of capable leaders among the revolutionaries, have proved insuperable obstacles. For a time the crisis is averted and the Empire is intact, but the essential situation is unchanged, and the great peril for Russia exists to-day much as it existed when he described it.

CHAPTER II.

1882-1887.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE CONGO—
SUAKIN EXPEDITION—IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

AFTER leaving Russia Law had not long to wait for an offer of employment, which came from a wholly unexpected quarter. At the beginning of the year 1883 the King of the Belgians wrote at some length to Lord Wolseley with reference to *l'Association Internationale du Congo*, which had been formed six years before as a result of the Conference of representatives of the nations of Western Europe held at Brussels. After defining the objects of the Association, which were to establish stations on the Congo from Lake Tanganyika to the coast, to create a trade route parallel to the rapids of the Congo, and to obtain territorial concessions from the independent native chiefs, he continued as follows: "*Stanley est à la tête de la tentative. Il a été fort malade et je voudrais trouver quelqu'un capable de commander en second, et même s'il le fallait de diriger en chef notre œuvre, un jeune Gordon s'il en existe.*"

"*La personne que je cherche doit être très habile, capable de conduire les blancs, de gouverner les noirs et ayant les*

vues politiques nécessaires pour soutenir et piloter à travers les conseils de nature diverses, cette entreprise fort difficile."

Lord Wolseley sent the letter to Colonel Brackenbury, who had acted as his military secretary during the Ashanti campaign, and inquired if he could suggest a suitable man for the post. Colonel Brackenbury thought that the young Gordon might be found in Law. But when communicating with his friend he hesitated to advise him to go to the Congo. "I must remind you," he wrote, "that the climate—of the Coast especially—in West Africa is very bad—none worse. The malarious fever is painful and depressing, and even if you escape its worst effects you will find that your energy is terribly taken out of you by the damp heat. You know I speak from five months' experience. I lost several friends there; and though I escaped wonderfully myself, I shall never forget the exhaustion of those weary marches."

However, Law decided to consider the offer seriously, and went to Brussels in February, where he was favourably received by King Leopold. He was at once struck by the initiative and business ability shown by the King, who in his turn was attracted by Law's ready grasp of the situation, and the eagerness with which he entered into it. It was eventually arranged that he should remain in London for the present, where he could be of service to the Imperial Association in different ways, and at the same time keep in close touch with M. Strauch, the President of the Association, in Brussels.

At this moment circumstances arose which brought the affairs of the Congo into unexpected prominence. The International Association had achieved a consider-

able initial success, and acquired what were practically sovereign rights over an immense territory. But this success had served to attract the attention of various Powers anxious to secure preferential treatment in regard to the commerce and the other benefits which might be obtained from the opening up of Central Africa. A project was formed in France for diverting the trade, which was expected to develop on the Upper Congo, by French routes to French ports on the Coast. Portugal revived an old claim to certain territories on the Lower Congo, and at the mouth of the river. Mr Gladstone's Government, apparently regarding France as the most dangerous of these disturbing elements, conceived that the best means of opposing her would be to support the claims of Portugal. Negotiations were accordingly opened for an Anglo-Portuguese Treaty, which would acknowledge the right of Portugal to the disputed territories, and thereby enable her officials to exercise an effective control over the trade of the Congo.

The terms of the proposed Treaty were the immediate subject of hostile criticism on the Continent. The Imperial Association, seeing the success of the enterprise and its very existence threatened by France on the one hand, and by Portugal supported by England on the other, hastened to come to terms with France. In return for an undertaking on the part of the French Government to respect the possessions and acquired rights of the Association, the latter undertook, in the event of unforeseen circumstances compelling it to realise its possessions, to give the "first refusal" to France.

The news of this agreement aroused considerable

indignation on the part of the British public, whose limited information on the subject only enabled them to discern a supposed advantage gained by France at the expense of British interests. Much the same view was expressed in a leading article of 'The Times.' It was pointed out that the Imperial Association had by its action divested itself of its former character of benevolent trustee and foster-mother for free African States, and had decided to exploit its assets upon the ordinary commercial lines. This being the case, its rights, titles, constitution, and political pretensions must be subjected to a rigorous scrutiny, and generally it behoved the Foreign Office to be very careful.

This irritation was intensified by the action of the United States Government, which proceeded to acknowledge the flag of the Imperial Association as that of a friendly government, on the grounds of its philanthropic character and the commercial interests of America.

Meanwhile there had always existed in England a strong body of opinion which held that the interests of the Imperial Association, and the cause of civilisation generally, alike demanded that the pretensions of Portugal should not be recognised. This was the firm conviction of the English philanthropic and mercantile communities interested in the Congo, who held that the general character of Portuguese administration in her tropical dependencies was not such as to inspire confidence. For this reason they had themselves attempted to thwart the claims of Portugal by protest meetings and petitions to the Foreign Office, and were by no means displeased to see their object effected by

the action of France and the Imperial Association. It only remained for them to convert public opinion in England to their view.

A vigorous campaign was accordingly opened in the Press for this purpose, in which Law acted to some extent as the mouthpiece of the Association. In a letter to 'The Times,' and in an article which appeared in 'The Nineteenth Century,' he refuted the claims of Portugal, and maintained that the best interests of England, and of civilisation, would be served by allowing the obnoxious Anglo-Portuguese Treaty to drop. He pointed out that there was ample precedent for the action of private individuals or Societies in founding States. The Imperial Association had declared, immediately after its recognition by the American Government, that no customs duties should be levied on goods imported into its territories, and that equal rights as regards liberty of residence, dealing in land, and general trading privileges should be accorded to citizens of all nationalities; the territories ceded to it would be formed into free States as soon as time and opportunity should allow. Public opinion in Germany and Holland, as in France and America, was opposed to the Portuguese claims, and favoured the course which the Association had adopted. All English communities directly interested in the Congo took the same view, and it only remained for the British Government to recognise the inevitable and decline to ratify the Treaty with Portugal.

During these negotiations Law was frequently brought into contact with King Leopold. The latter caused various statements to be drawn up for the benefit of public men in England, and made the

most precise arrangements for a swift and effective publication of his views.

These plans were carried out by Law with a thoroughness and promptitude which won the admiration and gratitude of the King, who declared that he would make Law's career his personal concern. But events in connection with the Congo developed so slowly that Law decided to seek other work. For a time he was able to earn a certain amount with his pen, and two articles which he wrote upon Russia attracted considerable attention. He possessed a natural style, which was at once forcible and lucid, and he was able to marshal facts and figures in support of his contentions in a convincing manner. But with him writing was never undertaken for its own sake, but rather as a prelude to action—a publication of the ideas he desired to see carried out.

Work which was in some respects of a more congenial kind was offered to him through the agency of his friend Mr Morriss, the well-known solicitor, who had acted for him in his lawsuit against his former partners in Russia. The system of telephonic communication was then in its infancy in this country, and a small American group had formed the Globe Telephone Company for the purpose of establishing what was claimed to be an improved system for London. Unfortunately for the promoters, a larger and more powerful company, The United Telephone Company, was first in the field, and the affairs of the Globe Company were soon in a critical condition; indeed it appeared more than probable that all the capital invested in the undertaking would be lost. The directors were anxious to find a strong man to

undertake the general management of affairs in the crisis; Mr Morriss recommended Law for the post, which the latter at once accepted. As has been said before, he always, like a true Irishman, rather enjoyed a fight—a national characteristic which is of course vigorously repudiated by the inhabitants of that restless country. He had also other qualifications which fitted him for the work. In the course of his uphill struggles in Russia—as in after life—he was often associated with a bad business, and had to make the best of poor materials. Many men can succeed if they have the elements of success on their side, but few know to make the best of failure. The man who can play a losing game, the barrister who can keep down the damages in a bad case, the soldier who can fight a good rear-guard action—these are the men to whom people turn in the last extremity.

Law speedily made up his mind that the right policy for the Globe Telephone Company was to fight its rival tooth and nail, and compel it to amalgamate upon favourable terms. From his personal point of view, that of the manager with a fixed salary, it would have been better to carry it on as an independent enterprise, but he realised that this could but end in its being slowly crushed out of existence. For months a desperate struggle was carried on; Law and his associates laid themselves out to obtain all possible contracts and way-leaves, working night and day at the installation, outbidding the United Company, and stealing a march on it whenever they found an opportunity. One incident is sufficient to illustrate the manner in which Law conducted the campaign. He had heard that the late Mr William Whiteley had

repudiated a contract which he had made with the United Company, in disgust at their long delay in providing him with a telephone. Accordingly he proceeded to get his poles and wires set up as far as a point in close proximity to Whiteley's premises. He then watched for Mr Whiteley's arrival in the morning, and sent in his card. Mr Whiteley asked him his business, to which Law replied: "I have called because I am surprised to hear that you have not got a telephone." Mr Whiteley exclaimed indignantly that he was sick of the very name; he had been kept waiting by specious promises until he had repudiated the contract. "That," said Law, "is because you went to the wrong people. Had you come to us we should have treated you very differently." Mr Whiteley replied, "No, you would have been just the same; you would have got a contract, and kept me fooling on with nothing done." Law said that it would not be so, that he was prepared to make a contract to establish a telephone in Mr Whiteley's office within a reasonable time, and to pay a heavy penalty if he failed to do so. "What do you call a reasonable time?" inquired Mr Whiteley. "Would three o'clock this afternoon suit you?" was the answer. "Do that and you are my man," said Mr Whiteley. Thereupon Law produced from his pocket a form of contract ready for signature. It was signed at once, the Globe employés, who were waiting at the street corner in readiness, were summoned, and by three o'clock the telephone was installed.

The sequel justified these vigorous methods. The United Telephone Company came to terms with its rivals, and Law and his enterprising associates were

eventually able to congratulate themselves upon a tolerably satisfactory settlement.

No sooner was this struggle ended than a fresh page opened somewhat unexpectedly in Law's adventurous life. Though his career in the Army had been a brief one, he never lost his interest in military subjects, and he had kept his name on the list of officers of the Reserve; to his surprise he one day received a letter from the War Office, from whom he had not heard for fifteen years, offering him the chance of active service. The occasion for this letter arose out of the following circumstances.

Since the rebellion of Arabi in 1882, a dramatic sequence of events had riveted public attention to Egypt and the Sudan. The advent of the Mahdi, the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army, Gordon's mission to the Sudan, the actions of Teb and Tamai, and the siege of Khartum, had followed one another in rapid succession. The British Government was involved, despite its pacific intentions, in the desert warfare, and at the end of 1884 the Nile Expedition was undertaken to rescue Gordon and cover the evacuation of the Sudan. At the same time it was decided to despatch a force under Sir G. Graham to the Eastern Sudan for the purpose of destroying the power of Osman Digna there, clearing the country of the adherents of the Mahdi, and constructing a railway from Suakin to the Nile. This would at once provide a shorter and more convenient line of advance to the Sudan than the ordinary route up the river from Cairo.

Law had been appointed, as a Lieutenant, to the Reserve of Officers in October 1881; early in 1885 he

was gazetted for service on the transport of the E. Sudan Expedition, and sailed for Suakin. On his arrival there he was appointed transport officer, and found the work of disembarkation of men, animals, supplies, and stores in full swing. Many camels, horses, and mules had been supplied by the Indian Government, together with coolies, water-carriers, and muleteers. Law's knowledge of Hindustani stood him in good stead, and this, combined with his usual energy, speedily procured for him difficult and responsible work. The supply of drinking-water in the neighbourhood of Suakin was very limited, and the force depended to a great extent on the water provided by extemporised condensers on board the ships. This was conveyed to the various storage tanks by camel convoys, carrying barrels, indiarubber bags, tins, and skins which were filled from troughs on the pier. The work went on day and night, when the search-light of H.M.S. *Dolphin* was utilised. Here Law soon became a familiar figure, mounted on a gaunt trotting camel, armed with a long fly-switch, and won universal admiration by the way in which he handled his somewhat cumbrous command.

The Suakin Field Force under Sir G. Graham consisted of two British and one Indian brigade; when disembarkation began there were very few commissariat or transport officers, but by the third week in March each brigade had its own supply and transport establishment, besides which a transport was detailed for hospital service and for the carriage of water in the field. This latter necessity added enormously to the difficulties of the subsequent operations. Water tins had to be packed on camels and emptied into storage

tanks, or issued to the troops at the end of the march. Law was put in command of the transport of the Guards Brigade, with some 600 camels under his charge. The *personnel* under him consisted of No. 5 Company Commissariat and Indian Commissariat, with one officer, a quartermaster belonging to the permanent establishment of the corps, an officer attached from the Reserve of Officers, and two officers from the Indian Transport. There were also some 300 camel-drivers from India, about 80 Somalis from Aden, and 600 camels. It was by no means an easy command. The Somalis and Indians disliked one another intensely, and fights constantly occurred. The camels from India arrived in a wretched condition, which was aggravated by a considerable delay in the harbour at Suakin, and by defective arrangements for landing. In many cases they could not be slung from the transports, but were driven down a steep and narrow gangway, where accidents were frequent.

On March 20th the enemy were attacked and driven from the scrub which clothed the lower slopes of the hills near the village of Hashir, about seven miles from Suakin. The next step was the destruction of Osman's camp at Tamai, but before this could be effected it was necessary to establish an intermediate post in the desert. On March 22nd a force under Sir J. M'Neill was despatched for this purpose, and on the same afternoon was involved in the hard-fought little action generally known as M'Neill's zariba. Some 5000 Arabs, taking advantage of the dense scrub, made a sudden attack, and no less than 1500 were killed within the short space of twenty minutes, 112 of them within the zariba held by the Berkshire Regiment. After this reverse Osman

withdrew from Tamai, which was occupied on April 3rd, when the village and large quantities of ammunition were destroyed. As it was impossible to follow the enemy into the hills, the force then retired on Suakin. A notable commentary on the efficiency of the transport is provided by the fact that of the transport animals which accompanied the expedition, all but three returned, and of the three lost, one was killed in action.

But by this time the Government had decided not to undertake further offensive operations in the Sudan, and the construction of the railway from Suakin was indefinitely suspended. The town itself was to be held, but the field force was to be gradually withdrawn, and one of the first officers to be recalled was Law. He had been mentioned in despatches, and in recognition of his services he was awarded the Egyptian bronze star in addition to the medal and clasp: in the following year he was given the rank of major. The lessons of the campaign with regard to the organisation and management of transport were summed up in a valuable and very practical memorandum which he wrote on 'Transport Service with the Suakin Field Force.'

While the expedition was in progress, a crisis in our relations with the Russians had arisen in consequence of their attack and defeat of an Afghan force, and their occupation of part of the district of Penjdeh, in Afghanistan, and he was summoned to England, where it was felt that his knowledge of Russia might be of value to the Intelligence Department of the War Office. He happened to be visiting the heliograph station when the message announcing his recall was transmitted, and he left the Sudan literally at an hour's notice. After

this hasty embarkation he was laid up for the greater part of the voyage with a severe attack of enteric fever, but fortunately by the time he reached London the political situation was less critical, and he was enabled to secure a brief rest.

However, it was soon time for him to take the road again: an opportunity occurred of going to Manchuria in the interests of the Amur River Navigation Company. This Company had been formed to establish a steamer traffic on the river Amur, which afforded practically the only outlet to the Pacific for the territories east of Lake Baikal. A mail and passenger subsidy was granted by the Russian Government, a steamboat service was started, and various works erected on the Amur. But, as usually happens in enterprises of this kind, the initial expenses were out of all proportion to the immediate returns obtained, and the Company was presently in financial difficulties. In 1885 considerable sums were owing to the debenture-holders and other creditors, and further losses might lead to infringement of the terms of the contract and withdrawal of the Government subsidy. Yet it was of the highest importance to the country that the steamboat service should be maintained, and if possible improved. In these circumstances Law approached the Bondholders' Committee in London, to whom he was already well known, and volunteered to go out to the Amur and report on the situation there. His offer was accepted, and in August, to his great delight, he was enabled to start on his journey. For him the unknown was always attractive, and he was firmly impressed with the commercial possibilities of Asia.

There were also special reasons which had led him

to contemplate a journey to the Far East. One effect of the Russian scare had been to direct attention to Russian activities in Manchuria, and particularly to the development of the port of Vladivostock. There was every reason to suppose that reliable information, collected on the spot by one particularly qualified to do so, might be of service in the future to the Intelligence Department of the War Office.

He crossed the United States to San Francisco, and after narrowly escaping shipwreck in a typhoon, he reached Japan and proceeded to Vladivostock. Here he speedily made many friends among the various traders and officials. He conducted his observations with the greatest caution, being well aware that his presence could not commend itself to the Russian authorities, and that in the event of his displeasing them he would be in considerable personal danger. His experience of Russian administrative methods warned him that on the outskirts of the empire action is generally prompt and drastic, and might have secured its own justification before the news could reach Western Europe.

However, the serious Briton, with his blunt, outspoken manner, seemed to be a very harmless visitor, and though he was closely watched by the police officials, they were probably baffled by his straightforward methods. He used to relate that one morning, when his rooms were carefully searched, the only document to which exception might have been taken was lying on his writing-table—to it no attention was paid. But he had other uncomfortable moments. On board one of the river steamers he noticed with dismay that he was an object of great interest at the various

stopping-places, and that at each of these the captain was engaged in close colloquy with the police. When the boat reached her destination he was horrified to see a Russian officer and soldiers come on board and take counsel with the captain, while repeated glances were cast in his direction. At last he was summoned forward; and as he advanced, as he thought, to probable arrest and imprisonment, the officer announced that he had received instructions to meet the distinguished stranger who was travelling in the country and to do all in his power to make him welcome!

Apart from these almost too exciting incidents, the journey was never lacking in interest. From Vladivostock he went by road to Lake Khanka and on by boat to Khabarovka, now Khabarovsk. He eventually reached a point where he was politely informed by the officials that it was impossible to go any farther, and returning, he went on to the mouth of the Amur, where he formed a scheme for connecting the river by railway or tramway with De Castries Bay. His adventures also included a visit to a reputed gold mine, though the absence of security appeared to his cautious mind an insuperable obstacle to its development, and a terrible journey by sledge, which he described as the hardest experience of his life. He was also laid up for a time with a severe attack of fever, far from doctors and medical necessities; for days he lay in bed in great discomfort, directing an ignorant Russian woman, whom he had installed as nurse, in the mysteries of English cooking and sick-room attendance. There is no doubt that he had good cause to congratulate himself upon his safe return to England in the following winter.

Long afterwards, during the war between Russia and Japan, Law used to relate an incident of this journey, which showed how little the Russian officers realised the true danger with which they were threatened. "I wonder," Law said, "whether General Stössel now remembers an incident which took place when I was dining with him at an officers' mess in Manchuria. One of the company remarked: 'It is extraordinary how well these Japanese can draw; I found my Japanese boy making a pretty water-colour sketch to-day in the neighbourhood of the town.' Some one at the table suggested, as a humorous explanation, that the servant might be a spy. The idea vastly tickled the assembled officers, and 'un espion!' accompanied by roars of laughter, circled round the table." One wonders what distinguished officer of the Japanese General Staff was in those years serving as a common domestic in Manchuria, and what estimate he framed of the perspicacity of the Russian commanders.

The report which Law subsequently drew up for the Bondholders' Committee contained a clear statement of the financial position of the Company, and advocated certain practical reforms—an improved service of boats, changes in the management, a readjustment of rates for freight, and other matters which it is unnecessary to consider in detail. The report is an admirable illustration of his ability in utilising hastily acquired but accurate information to support the conclusions at which he had arrived, which always enabled him to present his views in a forceful and convincing form.

After his return to London it happened that he was for the first time brought into touch with English political life. Hitherto politics had had no attractions

for him : apart from the question of means, his ambition had never lain in this direction. All his instincts favoured action rather than discussion. But an opportunity for the exertion of his eminently practical qualities now offered itself in this field also.

At the end of the year 1885, when Lord Salisbury's Government was still in office, it was announced in the Press that Mr Gladstone had under consideration a scheme for establishing a separate Parliament in Dublin. This was immediately followed by the conclusion of an alliance between the Liberals and the Parnellites, and the lists were cleared for the fiercest Parliamentary struggle which our generation is likely to know. In January 1886 the House of Commons met, the Government was defeated on an amendment to the Address, and on the 1st of February Mr Gladstone became Prime Minister.

For the supporters of the Union in Ireland the issue was desperate. Their representatives in the House numbered only sixteen ; the remaining Irish members constituted a solid phalanx in favour of Home Rule. In Mr Parnell they possessed—what an Irish Party has so often lacked—a leader worthy of the occasion. They were to fight under the banner of Mr Gladstone, the one Englishman who could make a cause great and impress the imaginations of his countrymen with his own enthusiasm. Home Rule was no longer presented as a political expedient, but as a matter of justice and necessity.

A quarter of a century after the crisis there is still abundant evidence of the stress of the contest which severed party ties and personal friendships in England and opened a new era in political life. In Ireland it was well said that "there was blood in the air." To

the Irish loyalists the Union was no mere political creed: their nationality, their honour, their very existence were at stake.

By birth, associations, and opinions Law was naturally identified with the cause of Union. In the previous year, after his elder brother's death, he had become a trustee for his Irish estates, and had thus acquired a personal knowledge of the land question. There was also a certain personal tie which led him to take an active part in the contest. The Laws had always been intimately connected with the Saundersons of Castle Saunderson, and Law himself and the late Colonel Saunderson had been friends from boyhood. The remarkable personality of Colonel Saunderson—preacher, sportsman, and before all things a fighter—had the great quality of strength, and this was perhaps the key to the alliance. As a young man Saunderson represented his county in the House of Commons, and won some slight reputation as a vigorous speaker; but he had apparently decided to abandon politics in the year 1874, and during the ten following years devoted himself to looking after his property and to local affairs. The menace to the Union brought him once more into the arena: he was a born leader of men, and was accepted as such by the little band of Irish Unionists in the House. This was the position when Law landed in England. His mind was at once made up: he sought out his friend, and volunteered to serve under him for the Union.

His services were at once requisitioned for the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, an organisation formed for the purpose of making the cause of the Irish Unionists better known to the electorate in England. Every day

found Saunderson and Law at the offices of the Union, and the following months were spent in organising and carrying out an active propagandist campaign. Law laboured indefatigably and rendered invaluable help to his friend. He, too, was a fighter—one after Colonel Saunderson's own heart. His practical methods and gift for organisation, combined with his Celtic temperament, produced just those qualities which the crisis required.

The dramatic sequence of events in the year 1886 is a matter of history, and only the bare outline is necessary for the purpose of this narrative. The new House of Commons met in February, and in the debate on the Address Mr Parnell and Colonel Saunderson crossed swords. In April Mr Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill. This was followed by the great cleavage in the Liberal ranks, and on June 8th the Bill was thrown out by a majority of thirty in a full House. The General Election returned a clear majority of 110 against Home Rule. During a short session in August and September the long alliance between the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists was concluded, and the Union was saved. Law used afterwards to declare that had Home Rule been passed the Irish Unionists would have drawn the sword in grim earnest and he himself among the first.

As soon as he could spare the time from his labours at the offices of the I.L.P.U. it was necessary for Law to bethink himself again of some more remunerative form of employment. The curious element of chivalry in his character had once more revealed itself when, at a moment that his finances were at a low ebb, he had deliberately devoted himself to unpaid work. He now

received an offer from his former rivals, the United Telephone Company, to take up what was described as "a superior and confidential position which would enable him to give useful assistance to the Managing Director without interfering with the existing organisation and working of the Company's business." Pending a definite engagement, it was arranged that he should place his services at the disposal of the Company for a period of three months by way of probation. And it is an interesting commentary on the reputation which he had made for himself in connection with the Globe Telephone Company that, though he could not be said to have any great technical knowledge of the business, the salary proposed was at the rate of £1200 a-year. The mechanical side of the work specially appealed to him, and two notes which he prepared on the general management of a metropolitan telephone business, and on domestic telephony, provide interesting reading in the light of the subsequent developments made with telephonic communication in this country. His appointment was not, however, destined to be a permanent one. His position in the office was in its nature difficult, and produced certain jealousies and misunderstandings. He would never consent to occupy a post unless persuaded that he could do so to advantage, and he accordingly decided to resign.

Amid these manifold occupations he had found time for literary work. He contributed articles to the reviews, and even wrote a comedy, which does not, however, appear to have shown any special merit. He had also persevered with his invention, previously mentioned, for simplifying and accelerating the printing of telegraph messages. He was convinced that our Post Office

Telegraph system was worked upon a wrong principle. From the point of view of the general public, accuracy of transmission was of more importance than the actual speed of signalling over the wires. By the ordinary Morse system accuracy was sacrificed to economy and speed. He proposed to replace it by a system which would enable the sending operator to use the keys of an ordinary typewriting machine, and secure by this means alone the transmission and receipt of a message, automatically printed, at the receiving end of the line, letter by letter, as the keys were struck by the sender. It would also be arranged that a copy of the message, as transmitted, should be printed automatically before the eyes of the sending operator. By means of this invention the risk of error, inseparable from the Morse code, would be reduced to a minimum. It would also be possible for a newspaper, with its central office in London, to be set up simultaneously there and in provincial centres. The principle was not an entirely new one, for other inventions of this nature were already in existence: it could not, however, be claimed that any of these had produced a satisfactory working apparatus. By patient study and repeated experiments he satisfied himself that the necessary signals could in fact be correctly transmitted by means of electric impulses. It remained for him to show that the correctness and speed attained in a laboratory could be maintained unimpaired in practical working over an ordinary telegraph line.

With this object he afterwards formed a small company, in which he had the valuable support of the late Sir William Mackinnon and Messrs Clowes, the well-known firm of printers. A type-setting machine was

secured, and he was presently able to show type being correctly set by the apparatus at the desired speed. Experiments were conducted in the presence of several electrical experts, and their verdict was generally satisfactory, but it was pointed out that such experiments afforded no proof of the capacity of the apparatus under ordinary telegraphic conditions over an outdoor line. Unfortunately the additional capital required was not forthcoming, and further difficulties were created by the inventor's enforced absence from England. Patent fees and working expenses created a permanent charge, which it was found impossible to meet. Eventually the Company went into voluntary liquidation, the assets were purchased by the inventor, and the apparatus was stored until such time as he should be at leisure to devote himself continuously to the subject.

It is about that time that he also patented a flying machine, working by a kind of Venetian blinds, an invention which now has developed into the aeroplane, which he thus declared himself to have been one of the first to adopt.

In the beginning of the year 1887, public interest was centred on the problem of producing, in some useful and practical manner, some adequate and lasting expression of loyalty on the occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee. The Prince of Wales, with a keen appreciation of the direction of national ideas, had suggested some permanent representation of the resources and progress of the empire, the growth and development of which had been the feature of the Queen's reign. A strong committee was accordingly formed, and a scheme was produced for establishing an Imperial Institute, with the object of "advancing the industrial

and commercial resources of every part of the empire." It remained, however, to clothe the scheme in more definite form, and to lay down the lines upon which the Institute should work.

Law's business experience abroad had long before impressed him with the need for some form of Commercial Intelligence Department in this country. The want of something of this kind has been acknowledged at different times by almost every section of the business community, when faced by the ever-present problem of adjusting the relations of supply and demand, and of taking the right goods to the right market. The help of the Government, and especially of the Foreign Office, has been consistently invoked towards the opening of new markets or the improving of old ones. But, as Law once observed, the annexation of new territories for the special benefit of distressed traders, or the direct interposition of British Ambassadors and Consuls in securing profitable contracts for their countrymen, is out of the question: the collection and diffusion of information on trade subjects would be by far the most important service which could be rendered. He discerned the requisite machinery in the proposed Imperial Institute. The idea occurred to him while reading the newspapers in the Army and Navy Club, and on the same day it was embodied in the following Memorandum:—

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE

(A SUGGESTION).

Following the original suggestion of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, the Committee of the Imperial Institute have laid down as the basis of their under-

taking, that "The purpose and the effect of the Institute will be to advance the industrial and commercial resources of every part of the Empire." The Report of the Committee presented to the Prince of Wales shows that the importance of the collection and distribution of early and accurate information on trade subjects has been fully recognised. The opinions also collected by Mr Bryce from trade experts and published in Parliamentary Papers last session, the debates in the House of Commons on trade depression, and the numerous publications which have appeared on the same subject, all show that those best qualified to judge are unanimous in their belief that the most valuable assistance could be rendered to the commerce and industry of the Empire by the continuous and systematic supply of such varied and detailed information as is manifestly beyond the reach of individual merchants or manufacturers.

I would suggest that the requirements thus clearly understood and acknowledged might be met by making a Commercial Intelligence Department the central feature of the Imperial Institute. Such a department, if properly organised and conducted, would always have its work clearly before it. It would be full of life in itself, the nature of its duties always driving it forward and forcing it to seek the extension of its influence and usefulness. The daily requirements of a Commercial Intelligence Department would necessitate intimate relations with the corporate and individual representatives of trade in all parts of the Empire. Reports, statistics, and all kinds of information would be eagerly sought from Colonial and Indian officials, diplomatists and consuls. Collections of samples of manufacturing

industries, a library for industrial, commercial, and economic study, a fully equipped map-room for geographical and geological reference, and a special library for the classification of patents and inventions, all these would be found necessary in the daily labours of the department; and the information to be acquired from their study would be at the service of the public.

An example of the successful organisation of an Intelligence Department already exists in the Intelligence Branch of the War Office.

For the purposes of systematic working this department is divided into seven sections, of which six correspond with different portions of the globe, and one is occupied with the production of maps and the care of the library. Each section has its special head, holding the appointment for a given term, and selected as having a particular acquaintance with the affairs and languages of the countries which his section represents. Under the Sectional Officer are employed one or two similarly selected juniors, who are generally candidates for promotion to the charge of a section. In addition, when work presses in any particular section further assistance is obtained by temporarily engaging the services of any available officers who may be peculiarly qualified for the special duties required. There is also a staff of draughtsmen for the map-room, and a staff of clerks to assist in the heavy labours of copying and indexing. The entire organisation is under the charge of an exceptionally qualified senior officer, and it is worthy of special attention that besides the value of the actual work done, the department forms an admirable school for the training of young officers in intelligence work.

As regards conferences and lectures, the frequent necessity of secrecy in its work prevents the military department from publicly seeking or giving information by this means. This want is supplied to the military profession by the Royal United Service Institution, a society to which most of the workers in the Military Intelligence Branch belong, and in the proceedings of which they often unofficially take an important part. The United Service Institution provides for lectures and discussions on questions of current interest, it publishes valuable reports and papers, and maintains a library and map-room, and an interesting museum of military inventions and curiosities. If the peculiar conditions under which the Military Intelligence Branch necessarily works did not prohibit the idea, it is evident that a fusion with the United Service Institution would, in many respects, be advantageous to both establishments. No such special considerations will prevent a Commercial Intelligence Department from combining under one organisation both the confidential work of the War Office Branch and the public proceedings and arrangements of the unofficial Institution. And with this easy extension of the lines of the official military department, it would seem that a Commercial Intelligence Department may readily provide for nearly all the operations and arrangements which have been laid down by high authority, as requisite in the interests of commerce, and essential for the active and comprehensive usefulness of the Imperial Institute.

It is impossible within the limits of a short memorandum to seriously consider the important questions of government, of selection of staff, and of initial and annual expenditure, but one suggestion as regards the

staff must be made at once. The utility of the Institute will be greatly increased if it is assured of the active and sympathetic co-operation of the various Government departments with which it will necessarily have to deal. I think, therefore, that the Commercial Intelligence Department might advantageously, at all events in the first instance, draw some of its workers from the four public departments chiefly interested in its labours. The staff might, I think, be formed by taking nominees of the Colonial Agents-General and trade specialists recommended by the Chambers of Commerce, and by selection, under special arrangement, from among the younger officials of the Board of Trade, the Colonial Office, the India Office, and the Foreign Office. Such an arrangement would, I think, tend towards the establishment of desirable intimacy of relations between all the different official and unofficial bodies interested in the work, and would also afford a much-needed opportunity of giving young officials some practical training in commercial affairs.

In conclusion, I trust that this very brief and rough sketch of an important organisation may convey some idea of the great opportunity for comprehensive usefulness which I think may be secured by making a Commercial Intelligence Department the centre around which the other arrangements of the Imperial Institute will in due course suitably group themselves. Such a department would certainly do much towards fulfilling the expressed wishes of the representatives of commerce at home, and having regard to the enormous and increasing volume of our trade with the Colonies and India, it would provide for due attention to the interests of every colony and possession of the Empire. It would

seem to offer a common meeting-ground, as well as a centre of information and interest to all, official and unofficial, representatives of commerce and industry throughout Her Majesty's dominions.

E. FG. LAW.

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB,

Feb. 1st, 1887.

Major Law sent fifty or sixty copies of this Memorandum to presidents of various Chambers of Commerce, the members of the Committee of the Imperial Institute, and other influential persons who were likely to be interested in the subject. Most of these adopted a thoroughly British and non-committal attitude. A few were sceptical. Mr Joseph Chamberlain wrote that "his experience as a manufacturer with relations all over the world led him to the conclusion that the private enterprise of individuals was much more valuable than any Government or official inquiries could possibly be. As a rule a demand for Government assistance is made by people who have no experience in trade, or who, having been unsuccessful, think that they could have done better with Government help." Mr John Bright considered that if the plan could be established and always well worked it would be valuable. "But," he remarked, "I am not very sanguine that this could be done. How soon would the Intelligence Department cease to give intelligence, and how soon would its officers be living comfortably upon their salaries and doing little?" Mr Bryce approved of the scheme. It also found favour with various Chambers of Commerce, and promises of support in the Press were made by Mr Walter and Mr William Blackwood. But the most encouraging responses to the

Memorandum were made by the late Professor Huxley and Sir Frederick Abel, the Chairman of the Imperial Institute Committee. Professor Huxley had already addressed a letter to 'The Times' with reference to the Institute. His view was that if it were to be a place in which the fullest stores of commercial knowledge would be made available to the public, it was essential that it should be in close touch with the business world, and that this was impossible so long as it was located in South Kensington. He put Law in communication with the secretary of the London Chamber of Commerce, and advised him to rely mainly on that body. Sir Frederick Abel included Law's Memorandum in a pamphlet, many copies of which were issued by the Institute. On the 22nd of April he delivered an address at the Royal Institution on the work of the Imperial Institute, on which occasion the Prince of Wales presided. After enunciating the various aims and objects of the Institute, he stated that "The system of correspondence to which I have more than once alluded in indicating some of the work of the Institute, in relation to technical education and industry, and which will form a most important part of the main ground-work of its organisation, is not in the least theoretical in its character. Its possible development has suggested itself to many who have given thought to the future sphere of action of the Institute in connection with commerce and industry; to myself, who for many years have been, from time to time, officially cognisant of the work performed by what are called the Intelligence Departments of the Ministries of War abroad and at home, the direct and valuable bearing of such a system upon the work of the Institute suggested itself as soon as I gave thought to the possible future of

this great conception, and to Major FitzGerald Law belongs the credit of suggesting that the well-trying machinery of the War Office Intelligence Department should serve as a guide for the elaboration of a Commercial Intelligence Department. This Department, which will, it is hoped, ere long commence its operations, by establishing relations with the chief Colonies and India, will be in constant communication with the Enquiry Offices to be attached to the local commercial establishments and to other provincial representations of the work of the Institute, systematically distributing among them the commercial information and statistics continually collected. It will be equally valuable to the Colonies and India by bringing their requirements thoroughly to the knowledge of the business men in the United Kingdom, and by maintaining that close touch and sympathy between them and the people at home which will tend to a true federation of all parts of the Empire."

While the future of the Imperial Institute was under discussion, the whole question of diplomatic and consular assistance to British trade abroad had been attracting attention. In the previous year, Lord Rosebery being then Foreign Secretary, and Mr Bryce Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a long correspondence on the subject had been presented to both Houses of Parliament. The Foreign Office had invited an expression of opinion, and communications were addressed to it from various individuals and commercial bodies; it had obtained the views of certain of Her Majesty's diplomatic officers, and by means of a circular letter it had collected different suggestions from members of the Consular Staff abroad. The publication of this correspondence as a Blue Book

was followed by a debate in the House of Commons, and considerable public interest was aroused.

Law had, of course, a special knowledge of the conditions of British trade in Russia and elsewhere, and held strong views as to the possibilities of Government action. He pointed out in a memorandum which he wrote after the publication of the Blue Book, that the existence of a grievance and the difficulty of meeting it could no longer be denied. In the past it had always been the trader who went first and opened his business abroad: the Government representative followed, and his commercial duties had been confined to protecting interests which were already established. He was not expected to take the initiative in opening up or developing trade. But now different conditions obtained. The British merchant no longer confined his operations to countries of which he had some personal experience. Improved postal and other communications had induced him to seek business in lands which he had never seen, and concerning which only scanty information was available. Thus appeals to the British Consul became frequent: assistance whetted the appetite of the merchant, and he became inclined to regard Diplomatic and Consular officials merely as commercial agents. These, on the other hand, recognised that if they revealed themselves to foreign authorities in that character, their power to help their countrymen *ipso facto* disappeared, for their influence was based upon their official rank and status. Besides this, they could only devote a limited time to commercial matters, and if they assisted a particular merchant they might discover that they had thereby been guilty of undue preference, and prejudiced the

interests of his competitors, who had an equal claim on their services.

Thus it was necessary to consider carefully the limits within which official assistance might legitimately be afforded to the trader, and the obstacles which stood in the way. Want of adequate funds prevented an increase of the official staff abroad, the establishment of a special department at home, and the miscellaneous expenditure required for collecting information and samples. A carefully elaborated and improved organisation was required to increase and improve the character of such information and assistance as might be available. There should be an opportunity for members of the Diplomatic and Consular services to gain a proper commercial training. It was also essential that business men should realise the limits within which assistance of this nature could be given.

Mr Bryce had enumerated the various demands and suggestions addressed to the Foreign Office under twenty-four separate headings. Law examined them in detail, and elaborated a general scheme for Consular reorganisation. The same considerations formed the basis of his proposal to utilise the Imperial Institute as a Commercial Intelligence Department. And it so happened that he was now given the opportunity of devoting himself to the work which he had most at heart—the development of British trade abroad. Sir Henry Brackenbury, as head of the Intelligence Department of the War Office, had been greatly impressed by the value of his friend's services there, and pointed out to the authorities at the Foreign Office that he should prove a valuable man for their

purposes. Sir Philip Currie, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, saw Law, and in a subsequent interview with Lord Salisbury, Sir Henry's opinion was confirmed. Law was offered an appointment described as Financial and Commercial Attaché, his headquarters were fixed at St Petersburg, but he was given a roving commission in the various countries of the Near East. The post was a new one—hitherto there had only been one Commercial Attaché stationed at Paris—and its value really depended upon what Law himself could make of it. He accepted it without hesitation, and at the age of forty-one entered the public service for the third time.

CHAPTER III.

1887-1890.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL ATTACHÉ—RUSSIA—
PERSIA—THE CAUCASUS.

IN order to explain Law's work as Commercial Attaché it is necessary to present in outline the political situation in Eastern Europe at the time of his appointment. It must be frankly admitted that he went there with his mind made up with regard to one of the chief factors in the so-called Eastern Question. He knew Russia as few other Englishmen knew her, and as a result of that knowledge he mistrusted her profoundly.

British policy in the Eastern Mediterranean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries might have been summed up as a series of more or less ineffective attempts to protect the decaying power of Turkey from Russian aggression. In England at this time there were special reasons for Russophobia. The visit of the Prince of Wales to India, and the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by the Government, had directed the eyes of the British public eastwards. It suddenly became manifest that at most of the

different points where British interests were involved Russia might generally be discerned as a neighbour of a rather suspicious character, and often as a dangerous rival. Our communications with India in the Eastern Mediterranean, the North-West Frontier, our trade with China—all in turn supplied grounds for viewing the machinations of our rival with grave concern.

In the Near East our difficulties were increased by the unending discord between the Ottoman Government and the subject Christian races. The inefficiency of the Ottoman administration and the growing aspirations of the young and vigorous Christian races had produced a state of chronic war. Sooner or later war meant Russian intervention, and Russian aggrandisement at the expense of Turkey. Here the position of England has always been a delicate one, for she must choose between leaving her former ally to the mercy of Russia and laying herself open to the charge of supporting a Mohammedan persecution of the Christian races. Lord Beaconsfield had consistently opposed all foreign intervention in Turkey, but at last the national conscience was shocked, or considered itself shocked, by the reports of fresh atrocities, and held that the responsibility for these must be shared by all who supported the Sultan. When Mr Gladstone's Government took office in 1880 it was virtually decided to leave the Sultan to his fate, and from this moment British influence at Constantinople steadily declined. In the following years events in Egypt widened the breach between the two countries, and England's place in Turkey was presently taken by Germany. German officers were introduced to reorganise the army, and

henceforth the Turks looked for help, not to London, but to Berlin.

In England there has always existed a strong body of opinion opposed to this retirement. Since the days of the great Lord Stratford his disciples have held that British influence must be maintained at all costs, not only at Constantinople, but in the Balkan States. Turk and Christian alike have recognised in England the one disinterested nation among the Great Powers. This view is expressed in the historic message despatched by Sir Robert Morier to Sir William White at Constantinople in 1885, during the very strained situation caused by the union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia: "If you can help to build up these people into a bulwark of independent States, and thus screen the Sick Man from the fury of the northern blast, for God's sake do it." And this Sir William White actually achieved. He succeeded in preventing the Sultan from active interference, though incited to do so by Russia, and was instrumental in establishing friendly relations between Sofia and Constantinople. The sequel has shown that the best obstacle to the advance of Russia in this quarter is a barrier of independent Balkan States.

Law's own attitude in this question is disclosed in an article which appeared in 'The Quarterly Review' at the beginning of 1887, the year of his appointment as Commercial Attaché. He alluded to the change which had come over public opinion in England with regard to the "Eastern Question." It was now believed that the condition of Turkey was hopeless, her value as an ally *nil*, and that British interests were no longer concerned in the fate of her capital. But an examination of the

actual facts showed clearly that to keep the Russians out of Constantinople was still a matter of primary importance to Great Britain. On this depended the balance of power in Europe, our own supremacy in India, and our commercial interests in the markets of Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan.

He quoted various instances to prove that Russia now looked even more covetously towards India than she did towards Constantinople. An almost universal belief in the marvellous riches of India had grown up among Russians of every class. The officials bethought themselves of lucrative appointments, the commercial community saw a market for its wares; even the poverty-stricken peasantry was obsessed by a vision of the wealth of the East. Law declared that the phrase, "If only we had India," was frequently heard in Russia, and he believed that practical steps were already being taken towards the desired end.

In the event of a Russian attack, the port to which our troops and stores would be directed was Karachi, and this could be reached fourteen days sooner by the Mediterranean than by the Cape route. But a Russian occupation of Constantinople would endanger the security of all routes traversing the Eastern Mediterranean. Turning to the question of attack, he pointed out that in the past we had frittered away our energies in vain in the Baltic and the Crimea. The vulnerable points of Russia could only be reached from the south-east shores of the Black Sea. Armenia and the Trans-Caucasus must be the scene of the decisive land operations, but this would be impossible if the Bosphorus were closed against us. An attack in this quarter would give us special advantages never

hitherto enjoyed: it would relieve Turkey from all apprehension of invasion, and turn the flank of the Russian advance on India. Victory would drive her back beyond the confines of the Caucasus and inflict a lasting blow.

For these reasons he advocated a forward policy in our diplomacy in Eastern Europe as the best preparation against a real and imminent danger. Already our prestige there was considerable as the champions of national liberties: we had recently saved Bulgaria, as in the past we had saved Turkey. Nor was there any reason to fear the consequences. The British Empire was solidity itself as compared with the Empire of the Tsar. It only remained for British statesmen of all parties to be true to themselves, to remedy the acknowledged deficiencies in our armed forces, and to consolidate our position in the Near East.

Law thought that our indifference to our interests there was largely due to an exaggerated idea of the power and resources of Russia. This he proceeded to demolish in an article on "Russian Soldiers and Russian Armaments," which appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine.' The actual numbers which had been recently published by the Intelligence Department of our War Office in a work entitled 'The Armed Strength of Russia,' gave a fictitious idea of her power. Law asserted that the Russian peasantry, from which 90 per cent of the recruits were drawn, was probably the most un-military class in Europe. "The moment the soldier gets out of his uniform he reverts completely to his original condition, and after twelve months' absence from the colours he is, on rejoining, little better than

a new recruit. He takes no pride in his uniform, he hates the irksomeness of military discipline, and he particularly hates fighting. *In vino veritas* is a familiar adage, and when in his cups the one desire of the moujik is to embrace everybody." There are indeed savage instincts¹ in his semi-barbaric nature which render him capable of unspeakable brutalities when thoroughly aroused—witness the persecution of the Jews, or the treatment of Turkoman prisoners, or the conquest of the Caucasus. The genius of Skobeleff consisted partly in the fact that he thoroughly understood this peculiarity in the character of his men, and alternately permitted unbridled license and subjected them to the most rigid discipline. For example, after the storming of Gheok Tepe he allowed his soldiers to work their will on its defenders for seventy-two hours, during which they committed every atrocity, and a few minutes after the termination of that period had two of them shot for trifling offences.

Law did not fail to recognise their dogged determination and patience under difficulties, both qualities of the highest value to a soldier. From childhood they were inured to hardships against which complaint is useless. But he declared that it was only the expected danger or difficulty which had no terrors for them. The unexpected would always overwhelm them, and when left to their own resources they would perish from sheer bewilderment. "In all my wanderings among the Russian people," he said, "I cannot call to mind a single instance of real cowardice displayed; but, on the other hand, I cannot remember an instance of danger being courted from a love of adventure or a spirit of daring. *Élan* and initiative are unknown

quantities among the peasantry, and are therefore non-existent in the army." Despite their unwarlike nature, the men were—within certain limitations—good fighting material, but this could not be said of the officers. The Russian nation, generally speaking, consisted only of two classes—peasantry and nobility—and the officers had all the virtues and vices of the latter. They were, many of them, absolutely careless of death, but equally careless of their military duties and of the lives and welfare of their men. The strict and elaborate rules of their service gave them no sense of responsibility. Law had seen an officer on guard playing billiards in a heated room with sword and revolver and his greatcoat buttoned up to the throat: the regulations did not permit him to unbuckle a single strap. They did not, however, prevent him from leaving his post shortly afterwards and departing with his friends on a sledging expedition—leaving the guard to take care of itself. The officers were badly paid, and little was expected of them: the standard of education was low, and the ordinary routine of their lives was to play cards half the night and sleep half the day.

The general organisation of the army was indifferent, the transport and commissariat were defective, and the enormous distances and want of communication made mobilisation a difficult task. In a word, the armed forces of Russia were more formidable on paper than in actual warfare, and illustrated to perfection the national failing of putting good theory into bad practice. Sixteen years later the Russo-Japanese war has furnished irrefragable evidence of the truth of all this.

Law arrived in St Petersburg to take up his official duties early in January 1888. A somewhat chilling

reception awaited him there, for Sir Robert Morier had been strongly opposed to the new appointment, which he considered would upset existing arrangements and cause friction at the Embassy. He himself had made rather a speciality of commercial work, and negotiated more than one commercial treaty. He also disliked the idea of a man who had spent many years in the country as a merchant returning thither in an official capacity. The result was that when Law was announced, Sir Robert—who was a big, outspoken man of the Bismarckian type—turned round in his chair and exclaimed, “Well, sir, I’m d——d if I know why you are here!” But before the interview which had opened so unpropitiously had come to an end, the two men had conceived a strong liking for one another. The ambassador was a man of great force of character, and held somewhat unconventional views, to which he was wont to give expression in still more unconventional language. A very considerable sensation might be created by a full publication of his correspondence. His personality appealed to Law at once, while the ambassador in his turn was attracted by Law’s enthusiasm and originality. He was quick to recognise the value of his linguistic gifts and his technical knowledge of the various commercial subjects which were referred to him.

Another friend whom Law made at the Embassy was Colonel Ivor Herbert, now Major-General Sir Ivor Herbert, at that time military attaché, who had seen service in Egypt and the Soudan, and had also found time to cultivate those wider interests which have since led him to adopt a political career. The two men had much in common, and afterwards lived

together for some months in St Petersburg. He was also closely associated with Mr Frederick Harford, now British Minister at Darmstadt, Sir Charles Eliot and Sir Arthur Hardinge, both brilliant scholars, and regarded as the most promising juniors in the Service.

Law was speedily occupied with various financial and commercial matters, and wrote valuable reports upon Russian Finance, the State Bank, Mineral Production, the proposed Tariff Mission, and other questions. He was, moreover, remarkably successful in winning the confidence of the business community, thanks to the practical experience which he had gained in early years. He also made friends with Russians of all classes and of every rank, whom he generally found agreeable and intelligent companions.

After a few months it was thought advisable that Law should proceed to Persia, and the excellent impression which he had made is revealed in the following letter addressed by Sir Robert Morier to Lord Salisbury: "It was with very great regret that I parted with him and saw myself deprived of his services for I fear many months to come. During the very short time that he has been discharging his duties at H.M.'s Embassy he has by his tact, his thorough acquaintance with Russian officials and Russian ways, and the superiority of his knowledge, technical and other, succeeded in establishing relations of a very friendly kind with the higher and lower Tchinovniks (officials) with whom he has to deal, and who, owing to the special customs of this place, are almost inaccessible to an Ambassador. In every single case in which I have had to employ him he has shown rare capacity and sound judgment, with great lucidity and

a vast power for work." Sir Robert wrote personally to Sir Henry Brackenbury to the same effect.

At the beginning of May Law travelled to Odessa, where he was joined by his cousin, Colonel Leslie Ellis, and proceeded with him by coasting steamer to Batoum, calling at the various Black Sea ports. They also visited the battlefields of the Alma, Inkerman, and Balaclava. From Batoum they took the train to Tiflis, whence they sent on their heavy baggage to Baku, in order that they might travel right through the wild regions lying to the west of the Caspian. At this time it was an almost unknown country, and a special interest attached to it by reason of its long struggle for independence against the forces of Russia.

The name "Caucasus" is generally used to describe not only the mountain-range but also the Russian territories lying to the south of it—as far as the northern marches of Turkey and Persia. The range extends from the Black Sea to the Caspian, a distance of some 650 miles, with an average width of about 100, and the country to the south is similar in character—a land of inhospitable uplands, deep isolated valleys, and dense forest. Since the beginning of history it has been the natural refuge of vanquished races. Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Scythians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks, and Slavs—all in their turn have overrun the wide plains of Mesopotamia. Each successive wave of conquest has surged up to the mountain barrier on the north, sweeping the refugees before it; so that the Caucasus is a land of many races, many tribes, and many languages. Its towns and villages are built for defence—perched on inaccessible ridges beneath the shelter of sheer cliffs: even the houses are arranged with a view to the possibility of

street fighting. The inhabitants have all the wild bravery of the mountaineer, but the natural defences of their country have in the end proved to be a source of weakness. The various tribes are kept apart by nature's barriers, by precipice and chasm, no less than by difference of race: union has always been impossible. A series of wars against the growing power of Russia culminated in a final struggle of sixty years' duration. It was not until the middle of the last century, when the great Georgian road had been driven through the country from north to south, when whole forests had been cut down by the invaders, and resistance slowly crushed out in one mountain fortress after another, that Russian rule was established.

At Tiflis, Law and his friend took the Georgian road northwards over the Goudaour Pass close to Mount Kasbek to Vladikavkaz. Here they turned east, and leaving the mountains were soon on the open steppe—the country of the Terek Cossacks. The monotony of the dreary treeless plains was only broken by an occasional Tartar village—a collection of flat-roofed hovels built of mud. The whole district still gave the impression, not uncommon in the Near East, of a conquered country in the hands of an army of occupation. In the villages were wild-looking men, armed with rifle, pistol, or murderous-looking knives, and at every few miles along the road a Cossack post, or a blockhouse garrisoned by a detachment of soldiers, maintained the rule of the Tsar.

They passed rapidly through this district to Temir Khan Shura, the capital of Daghestan, covering as much as 100 miles in the day; the road was good as long as daylight lasted, though after dark it became indis-

tinguishable from the steppe. At this point they turned south again into the mountains, and were forced to exchange their carriage for a Russian post-cart, a springless, comfortless vehicle drawn by a makeshift team of three horses. The journey speedily became eventful and even dangerous. Sometimes the road skirted an overhanging wall of rock, sometimes there were only a few feet between the wheels and a yawning precipice; sometimes both of these features appeared in unpleasant combination. In one perilous night journey the horses bolted, and narrowly escaped a drop of many hundred feet: it was then necessary to turn the cart on a narrow ledge and return to their starting-point. Eventually they came safely to Gunib, the last of the Caucasian strongholds held by Schamil against the Russians. It is perched on the summit of an almost perpendicular rock, and stood a long siege and was finally taken by storm in 1859. At Gunib their arrival created quite a sensation, for very few Englishmen had been seen in the place before. They stayed for a short time to visit the fortifications, and then drove on eastwards to the Caspian, skirting its shores until they reached Derbent. From this point they took the steamer to Baku, and on to Enzelli, the meeting-place of Russia and Persia.

While making their preparations for the ride through to Teheran they stayed with the British Consul at Resht, and here—as at other points on the journey—Law gathered miscellaneous information about the condition of the country; Resht, which is still practically the northern gate of Persia, affording him exceptional opportunities.

In Persia there are two modes of travelling—by caravan or riding post. For the latter an order must be

obtained to use relays of Government post-horses, and all luggage must be carried in saddle-bags. In this way some 80 or 100 miles a-day can be covered. The alternative, which Law and his friend adopted, is to get a caravan made up by a *charvodar* or contractor, who supplies the transport necessary for the whole party, but the rate of travelling is only about 20 miles a-day. In either case the nights must be spent at Chapar Khanahs or post-houses, generally in the midst of dirt and discomfort. Law's energetic temperament chafed at each fresh cause of delay, and at the various evidences of stagnation and incompetence in the country. In one lonely march he and his friend missed the road, and owing to their ignorance of the language, which Law subsequently learnt to speak, were separated from the caravan for two uncomfortable days, being reduced for a time to a diet of native bread and cucumbers. They rejoined the caravan just as a search-party of soldiers was being despatched by the Governor to look for them. But this proved to be the last of their difficulties, and on the 18th June they arrived without further adventure at Teheran.

The late Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was at this time British Minister at the Persian capital; from him the travellers received a hospitable welcome, and Law was temporarily attached to the Legation, in his capacity of Commercial Attaché. The daily round of official duties at a Legation, particularly in a spot so remote from the ordinary lines of communication as Teheran, cannot be described as strenuous or exciting. The reports of the dragomans, the receipt and despatch of official letters, and occasional attendance at some function of state, or the mild amusements and recreations available, do not

call for any special exertions on the part of the staff. The atmosphere is rather one of well-considered inaction. But Law's energy was not to be repressed even in such surroundings. He was soon engrossed in the manifold problems connected with trade and commerce in Persia which he thought of great importance to the British Empire. He even set his reforming hand on the Legation, and produced a plan for giving it an improved water-supply. Among the secretaries was Sir Fairfax Cartwright, British Ambassador now at Vienna, whose subsequent career has more than fulfilled the high estimate which Law had formed of his abilities. The two were often to be found engaged in profound discussions of serious subjects. It is recorded that one particular argument with regard to the battle of Waterloo lasted for a whole day. A rash statement was made with regard to the number of men engaged: Law scented figures from afar and joined issue in the most direct terms. Further points of difference arose. Law, having been over the ground with Sir Henry Brackenbury for the purpose of studying the campaign, was invincible: Cartwright had graduated in Germany and was immovable on points of detail. It was indeed a battle of giants, fought out with vigorous good humour on both sides. Fresh authorities were quoted: the library of the Legation was ransacked, and fresh volumes were moved up like reinforcements by the opposing champions—and it need hardly be said that both remained equally unconvinced at the end of the day.

Law's activity was at first sorely tried by the dilatory methods of Persia and the Persians. In some ways perhaps he suffered more than other people from the discomforts of travelling in the East: he

always declared that even the fleas of the country made him a special object of attack,—a huge bottle of Keating's powder was as indispensable as his despatch-box. His health suffered to some extent, and on the first stage of one of his journeys he was forced to dismount and lie down in the desert, but refused to hear of turning back, and eventually reached his destination. When travelling he was always accompanied by a large despatch-box, which was a source of infinite inconvenience to himself and his fellow-travellers. He could not understand or sympathise with a people who lost his despatch-box, and met every plan for their betterment with a murmur of "Please God, tomorrow!" The Persians were unaccustomed to his vigorous methods, and on one occasion, to the delight of his friends, the news came that his servant had fled in terror and taken "*bast*," or sanctuary, in a shrine near the capital. He was, however, soon persuaded that his fears were groundless, and was reinstated in his former position.

An instance of this divergence between Eastern and Western methods and habits of thought is provided by the account of a mission to Ispahan undertaken by Law in company with Mr Ralph Nevill, then an attaché at the Legation. Their object was to see the Zil-es-Sultan, a natural son of the Shah, who had formed an efficient army and attained a position of considerable power in that district. Then came one of those turns of fortune so common in the East: a palace intrigue was followed by his disgrace: his officials were removed from their appointments and replaced by the Shah's nominees, and his army disbanded. However, the Zil-es-Sultan showed himself a philosopher as well as a

statesman; he accommodated himself to the changed circumstances, and cultivated a taste for sport. He still retained a certain local prestige, and it was hoped that Law would interest him in the possibilities of trade, obtain as much information as possible on this subject, and incidentally discover what had become of the disbanded regiments.

At the appointed time Law and Nevill, accompanied by an interpreter, entered the palace grounds, and found the Prince, dressed in plain clothes, sitting alone in a sort of summer-house in his garden. As they approached he rose and greeted them warmly, begged them to be seated, and offered them sherbet and cigarettes. After the preliminary compliments had been paid, and the Prince had given polite expression to his confidence in the individual goodwill of the British Minister and in the friendship of Her Majesty's Government, Law came to the point, making some general remarks about the trade of the country and the great fertility which he had observed round Ispahan. The Prince, after a long pause, remarked that the harvest prospects were quite excellent. Law reverted to the subject of commerce: the Prince indicated in a polished manner that of this he knew nothing, and cared less. His visitor, far from taking the hint given him, delivered his own views on the subject: the two things necessary to develop trade for the mutual benefit of England and Persia were improved communications and the certainty of being able to collect trade debts. The first might well be provided by private enterprise, but as regards the latter—on which he observed with emphasis he had heard many complaints—any improvement must be effected

by the Persian authorities. The Prince replied by general assurances to the effect that his support could be counted on for anything which would encourage British trade, and professed a great desire to hear of Law's experiences in Russia. Law attempted to lead the conversation back to the proper channel by narrating the commercial results achieved by British enterprise in that country, in all of which the Prince evinced a polite interest. When the analogy was applied to Persia, he remarked in encouraging tones that civilisation was, of course, like an epidemic, which must necessarily spread in spite of all obstacles put in its way. Law dwelt on the importance of the support of the official classes being given to this progress, but at this point the Prince directed his attention to a captive specimen of the wild sheep of the country, which was being led about the garden, asked if his visitor was a sportsman, and graciously recounted a few anecdotes of his own prowess in the field. Urbane to the last, he then summoned his gardener, presented each of his visitors with a choice rose and a signed photograph of himself, and intimated with many expressions of cordiality that the interview was at an end. Law was forced to acknowledge defeat.

It was during this visit to Ispahan that, to his great amusement, Law made the discovery of a whole street of small manufacturers busily engaged in making old brass curios by the hundred.

Mention has already been made of Law's knowledge of military matters, and of the close interest which he took in all questions of this kind. In the Caucasus and Persia he always regarded the country through which he travelled as a possible theatre of war; he was firmly

convinced, as already stated, that in the event of hostilities with Russia, her most vulnerable point would be her southern frontier in Asia. In the course of the day's ride he would constantly stop and consider the strategic value of different positions—where the guns must be placed, or how a particular mountain pass could best be held. He also devoted considerable time to a study of the Persian army, which he described as “the most useless uniformed force in existence.” Promotion depended almost entirely upon influence and corruption, with the result that the officers had no authority, and discipline was non-existent. On one occasion the aged subaltern in command of a Legation guard was severely beaten by his men because they suspected him of embezzling some of their pay, but two days after the thrashing Law found him tranquilly seated in the guard-tent smoking his narghili, on terms of friendly intimacy with these sticklers for official rectitude. Law used to say that the idleness of the Persian soldier's life was varied by his activities as a money-lender—his qualification for the business being the fact that he was the only individual in Persia who could secure payment of his debts. Orders to leave the town where he was quartered were always strongly resisted, for it meant the temporary uprooting of his business.

There was practically no equipment for the army, stores and pack-animals being commandeered as they were required. Horses and saddlery were in an equally wretched condition. The men were armed according to their individual tastes, with Martinis, chassepots, needle-guns, or even long matchlocks, and there was no organised field artillery. The only

exception to the general tale of inefficiency was the small force which was organised and controlled by Russian officers at Teheran. To this Law attached the greatest significance, and considered that its importance would be incalculable in the event of any general disturbance in the country.

His attention was also occupied by purely commercial matters. The vital question at this time was that of possible railway development. In estimating the value of trade and commerce in a new field the means of communication available must always be the first consideration. In the case of Persia, these have a special importance for geographical reasons. The country may be described generally as a high central tableland, averaging some 4000 feet above sea-level, enclosed by chains of mountains. In the north and south the ranges are wild and rugged, but in the east and west gentler slopes form a good pastoral and agricultural country. The only important river is the Karun, with its various affluents; and there are smaller streams flowing into the Caspian. But though there are no natural waterways except the Karun, water is generally available for irrigation purposes. The agricultural products are varied and sometimes valuable, and there is also potential mineral wealth. Moreover, it must be remembered that Persia lies on the highway of the nations, that is, on the old trade route from Europe to India, and that a European Power which could establish a commercial supremacy in Persia would at once be in a position to revive this great trade.

For these reasons, competing Powers have formulated various schemes—first, for opening an avenue for their

trade with Persia through the mountain barrier, and secondly, for establishing a proper system of communication within the country to afford safe and cheap transport for all commodities. At this time the Persians still depended mainly upon pack-animals, camels, mules, donkeys, and horses being employed according to the nature of the district and the class of goods to be carried. The uncertainty and slowness of such a system presents an almost insuperable obstacle to trade development.

The foreign trade of Persia was carried on almost entirely with Russia in the north, and with England in the south, by way of the Persian Gulf. Certain proposals had been mooted for a railway concession in the north of the country, and Law was required to report upon the possible effect of such a concession upon English trade.

His view was that there were five great arteries for trade in Persia—

1. From Tabriz and Resht through Kasvin eastwards and south-east.
2. From the Caspian through Shahrud into Khorassan.
3. From Bagdad northwards to the provinces of Hamadan and Kermanshah, and on to Teheran.
4. From Bushire northwards to Ispahan.
5. From Bender Abbas northwards to Khorassan. The routes from Resht through Kasvin, and from the Caspian through Shahrud, were the main channels for Russian commerce, as those from the Persian Gulf and Bagdad were the main channels for British and Indian trade.

As regards advantages of transport, Kashan might be taken as the meeting-place of British and Russian goods

coming from the Caspian and the Persian Gulf respectively. The English would have a slight advantage in cost of carriage to Ispahan, and Russian goods would have a considerable advantage as far as Teheran.

Thus a railway concession in the north would offer no immediate benefit to English trade, while by cheapening the transport of Russian goods to Teheran and Ispahan it would give a distinct advantage to Russian traders. But if the scheme should not be opposed by the British Government it would be reasonable to suppose that Persia would simultaneously grant valuable privileges in the matter of the Karun navigation. If such privileges were secured, it might be urged, the serious beginning of railway enterprise, even if in the first instance in an unfavourable direction, might safely be encouraged, as all trade in the country would eventually benefit thereby.

Dealing with the details of the proposed concession, he considered that a line from Baku to the Persian frontier, though it might possess a considerable strategic importance to Russia, would be of small value for commercial purposes, while its construction would involve enormous expense on account of the engineering difficulties to be overcome. The Caucasus exported little besides petroleum to Persia. The export of goods from Poland and South Russia would be killed by the cost of transport and transshipment. Moscow and the neighbouring provinces were the centres of the Russian industry which supplied the markets of Persia, and goods from that district were shipped down the Volga and across the Caspian, at rates with which no improved system of land transit could hope to compete. Thus the only railways which could materially benefit Russian trade would be such as should lead from the Caspian

ports over the high northern range of mountains to the great central plateau of Persia.

After a close consideration of the relative merits of the various ports on the southern shores of the Caspian, Law inclined to the view that the Resht-Kasvin-Teheran-Ispahan route would be the one selected for the proposed railway concession. This would put the Russian merchant in direct communication with the great trade route leading east and west from Teheran. As compared with other possible lines it would combine the greatest strategical advantages with a minimum of expense for construction, and every mile which was laid down would be directly detrimental to British commerce.

On the whole, it appeared that from the point of view of the English merchant it was best that no railway construction should be undertaken in Persia for some years. The need was not imperative. The importance of Russian trade with Persia was frequently exaggerated. The bulk of that trade consisted of exports from the Caspian provinces of Persia. This could not be appreciably affected by the presence of competing foreign goods in Persia. Delay was all in favour of British trade. The Karun navigation might be properly organised, and a road constructed from Shuster to the north. Capital might eventually be forthcoming for a railway along that line. In any case, if the Russians were ever given a choice of routes for a railway from the north to Teheran, England should have a similar choice of routes from Teheran to the south. But if no concession were granted immediately to either country, British trade would be steadily increasing in South Persia, but unostentatiously, and in such a way that

when the progress was noticed it would be difficult to find any means of opposing it. Private enterprise could always be successfully undertaken by Englishmen: the Russians could do nothing without a concession and Government assistance. It was manifestly to our advantage that all concessions should be avoided for the present.

Nothing came of the proposed concession, and when three years later the project was revived Law expressed the same views. He pointed out that the construction of roads from Astrabad to Meshed, and from Astara to Ardabil, promised to give Russia a monopoly of the trade in the more important districts of Khorassan and Azerbeijan. But serious as this loss would be, it would be trifling as compared with what must follow from the construction of any railway from the Caspian to Teheran. This, he declared, would entirely close the markets of North Persia to England, and give Russian goods the opportunity of competing successfully in the South. The chief commercial centres would speedily be lost to our merchants, and their operations would be confined to the shores of the Persian Gulf.

Law also reported on the possibilities of developing British trade from this quarter by means of the Karun River navigation. The privilege of placing a certain number of merchant vessels on the river was claimed under certain Treaty rights which were not acknowledged by the Persian Government. On the debatable question of Treaty rights, Law expressed no definite opinion. "But," he observed, "my general knowledge of Eastern character leads me to believe that a *fait accompli* is seldom reversed." He pointed out that it would be easy to place a vessel of shallow draught on

the Karun river, which could steam up as far as Ahwar. Here it would be necessary to tranship goods across a level tract about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in extent, to the navigable portion of the river above Ahwar, whence they could easily be taken by boat to Shuster, and on by road to Burujird, perhaps the most favourable commercial centre in Persia. This route would be infinitely better than the road over the difficult passes by Ispahan and Shiraz. If this scheme were adopted, he was in favour of some form of subsidy being provided to enable English merchants to carry it out, on the ground that thereby a practical monopoly for British influence would be extended by the Karun river, as a counterpoise to the advance of Russia in the North-East. There were good grounds for supposing that this would not be unwelcome to the inhabitants of the Karun River country, the Shiah Arabs of Arabistan, the Lars and the Baktiaris, and that from a military point of view a secure base would be established in South-West Persia, surrounded by good allies in a fertile country.

During the four months which he spent in Persia, Law visited Ispahan, Tabriz, Meshed, the principal towns lying between these points and the capital, and the more important districts of the province of Mas-sanderan, bordering the Caspian. Two of his reports were subsequently issued by the Foreign Office in the series of published reports on subjects of general and commercial interest. They dealt respectively with the wool trade in Persia and Transcaucasia, and with British trade and foreign competition in North Persia. Both reports reveal a close knowledge of the subject and acquaintance with its more technical details. Two examples to illustrate the practical nature of his sug-

gestions may be quoted. In North Persia he found that the Russian trader had the advantage of finding ready to hand a number of trained agents, mostly Armenians and Russo-Persians, from the Government of Baku. These men spoke Russian and Persian, and being familiar with the business methods of both countries, could bring trade information to the Russian merchant, and ensure a wide distribution for his goods. There was no corresponding class which could be immediately employed in pushing British goods, but Parsees and Hindoos might easily be found in East Persia, who had had sufficient experience of European business to be of great service if judiciously employed. He also found in the bazaar of Khorassan that most prints were of a narrow width, which was apparently unknown to the British manufacturer. The Russian goods having obtained the mastery here, the peasants had become accustomed to the Russian narrow width. When English prints of a greater width were offered, necessarily at a higher price, the peasant, being by nature suspicious and quite unable to calculate the relative value according to width, feared that the higher price might not be fully justified by the additional quantity of stuff, and would decline to buy an article the value of which he could not fix satisfactorily in his own mind. Thus to introduce English goods in these districts it would be necessary to adopt, at least temporarily, the Russian width and Russian fold.

From Persia Law retraced his steps to Baku in order to be present on the occasion of the Tsar's visit, which had some political significance, as it was the first time that the Tsar had come to the Trans-Caucasian provinces of the Empire. Here Law met an old friend

in Mr J. F. Baddeley, whom he had known in St Petersburg in connection with the Amur Navigation Company, and who was now representing 'The Standard.' Mr Baddeley was also making a special study of Transcaucasia, some of the results of which have since been embodied in his recently published work, the 'Conquest of the Caucasus.'

The most elaborate precautions were taken to secure the safety of the Tsar by the police in Baku, where the population had doubled itself in the course of two or three years, and naturally comprised a larger criminal class than would be the case in towns which had grown up under normal conditions. By reason of this official vigilance Law was involved in a curious adventure. On the morning before the Tsar's arrival, in company with Mr Baddeley, he drove to Surakhani near Baku, to visit M. Kokoreff's works and the Temple of the Fire-Worshippers. On their arrival their request to be admitted to the works met with a curt refusal. A brief conference then took place between a gendarme and some of the bystanders, who apparently acted as amateur detectives, and subsequently the two Englishmen were asked to produce their tickets and certain credentials, and politely invited to await the arrival of the sub-manager. Presently Law observed some of the Indian Fire-Worshippers, and entered into conversation with them in Hindustani. They had come from India, he learnt, by way of Cabul, Herat, Mainena, and Bokhara, at the invitation of the Russian authorities, to perform their religious rites at Baku, and lend a picturesque touch for the benefit of the royal visitor. As they told of the incidents of their journey the suspicions

of the bystanders were further aroused—there is no more dangerous phenomenon than an Englishman with a knowledge of foreign languages. At last the train arrived, and there emerged, not the sub-manager, but the preestaff, or district police officer, to whom the gendarme remarked in stern tones: “These are the two, sir.” The Commercial Attaché of the Embassy in St Petersburg and the representative of ‘The Standard’ were about to be arrested as spies. Law produced his passport, and Mr Baddeley showed a document signed by General Tcherevin, the Chief of the Emperor’s bodyguard. The preestaff was unconvinced, and ordered their arrest. A furious altercation ensued, both Law and his friend being well qualified to give fluent expression of their opinion of Russian police methods, and uttering threats of dire consequences if they had to submit to the indignity of arrest. Eventually the officials were routed, but on arrival of the victors at their hotel in Baku a second preestaff, accompanied by a whole force of gendarmes, returned to the attack, and the scene was re-enacted—much to the delight of the onlookers, who were unaccustomed to see officialdom treated in so cavalier a fashion.

But the matter was not to end here. Law held strong views as to the position of H.B.M.’s representatives. He wrote to the local authorities that he would not continue his journey until he had received an ample apology, and meantime he proposed to stay at the hotel at their expense. No reply was received, whereupon he wrote again to the same effect, remarking that he had already had occasion to eat an excellent dinner for which they would be called upon to

pay. Finally, his firm attitude prevailed and full reparation was publicly made.

From Baku Law travelled west to Tiflis, and on to Koutais, where he was able to supplement the information which he had acquired on his outward journey as to the general condition of the Caucasus, or rather of the Trans-Caucasian provinces of the Russian Empire. An enthusiastic welcome had been given to the Tsar, but this had been largely due to the general hope that his visit would mark the end of the many grievances produced by the administration of Prince Dondoukoff Korsakoff, a Russian bureaucrat of the most unpopular type. When it was found that the Imperial visit brought no change, a strong anti-Russian reaction ensued. Law observed indications of this among the different peoples with whom he was brought in contact. At Koutais he was in one of the homes of the Georgian aristocracy, of whom he wrote, that "without personal experience it is almost impossible to believe that in the nineteenth century, and in a country traversed by railways, a fairly educated society can be found which displays in so remarkable a manner all the virtues and vices of the middle ages. The most exaggerated notions of honour, chivalry, and hospitality are combined with fraud, violence, and treachery, while Oriental craft is combined with the most child-like simplicity." The Caucasian code of honour and morality, though often difficult to understand, made them consider themselves infinitely superior to their masters, whose want of chivalry and principle they heartily despised. They did not attempt to conceal their hatred for Russia and all its works. Law admitted that it would not

be difficult for the Tsar, or any important member of the Imperial family, to awaken a feeling of personal loyalty in such a society, if local prejudices were gradually conciliated and local ideas studied in the administration. The tendencies of an aristocratic society, he observed, are ever towards its centre and to its acknowledged head, and that being necessarily Russian and in Russia, a voluntary and irresistible inclination to Russification would arise and grow. But there was no chance of such a policy being adopted. The craze throughout the Russian Empire was for immediate and unhesitating Russification, and whether it was German civilisation, Polish liberalism, or Caucasian feudal prejudices which stood in the way, a ruthless onslaught was always made upon all particularist sentiment.

Nor was the feeling among the Armenians in the Trans-Caucasus any more friendly towards Russia. The Armenians gained their individual advancement by superior industry and cunning, and were well aware of the fact. They had no feelings of gratitude for favours obtained by their own exertions, and were profoundly indignant at the educational and other measures enforced against their race for the purpose of a rapid Russification. This they heartily resented and secretly resisted. The Russian section of the population in the Trans-Caucasus consisted almost entirely of banished dissenters, or their children, who had suffered much at the hands of the Government, and were only kept from serious disloyalty by the fact that they were surrounded by unfriendly races. The Sunni Mohammedan tribes of the mountains were largely hostile to Russian rule. These were the

men who had resisted the conquerors to the last under the great Schamil, and had endeavoured to rise again during the war with Turkey. Many of them were now fanatical brigands, and numbers were exiled from time to time to Trans-Caspian provinces; but though their ranks were thereby somewhat reduced, they were not really subdued, and were animated by an irreconcilable hatred for Russia. The Shia Mussulman inhabitants of the Eastern provinces were the most contented of the peoples of the Caucasus, for they were making material progress, and were not striving for any special social recognition.

As regards the economic situation, Law remarked that trade generally had benefited somewhat under Russian rule, from the improved means of communication and the suppression of brigandage and lawlessness. A railway had been completed from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and much had been done in the way of road construction, but much more was required. Moreover, the labours of the Russian engineers were directed solely by military considerations, and commercial interests were disregarded. The petroleum trade was the only industry which had made any considerable advance, and the great natural resources of the country remained undeveloped. Yet nothing was more likely to strengthen the position of the existing *régime* than a steady increase of material prosperity.

It remained to consider the probable attitude of the inhabitants in case of an invasion of the Trans-Caucasus by a foreign Power. Both at the time, and now, this subject must be one of special importance. One school of thought, with which Law was associated, declares that in the Crimea England lost her oppor-

tunity; the vulnerable point of Russia is not the Black Sea littoral, not the Baltic, but the Trans-Caucasus and her southern frontier. A campaign based on a successful occupation of the Trans-Caucasus attacks her vitals.

To Law such a campaign was a real possibility, and it has already been shown that it was constantly in his mind at this time. His view was that none of the motley elements which comprised the population of the Trans-Caucasus would render material assistance to a foreign invader until, by his own efforts, he had fairly established his supremacy in the country. The Russian dissenters would resist a national enemy. The Shia Mussulmans of the eastern plains were not a fighting race, and would attach themselves in the first instance to what they believed to be the strongest side—which, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, would be that of Russia. The sympathies of the Armenians might be in favour of a Christian invader, but their activities would probably be confined to furnishing supplies and information. The Georgian race, the best of these potential allies, was incapable of concerted action, though various individuals might be expected to lead a sort of feudal levy to swell the ranks of the invading army. The same might be expected of the wild tribes of the mountains, and these, if properly led, would threaten the Russian communications and “contain” a number of their troops. In a word, everything turned on the initial success of the invader: if he could control the Georgian road, and give tangible proof that he was strong enough to protect his friends, he would find himself in a friendly country.

From the Caucasus Law travelled by way of Erze-

roum and Trebizond to Constantinople, following the ordinary trade route. This entailed another series of long and fatiguing rides, the distance to Trebizond being over 300 miles. He was accompanied by a somewhat remarkable companion. While he was at Teheran the whole of the Legation Staff was one day surprised to see a man run into the compound straight to the flagstaff, which he embraced with both arms, and refused to leave. He proved to be a runaway slave, and nothing would induce him to leave his sanctuary. The amiable Minister was much embarrassed, and was afraid of possible annoyance with the authorities and the public. Law, who was leaving Teheran in a few days, saved the situation by offering to take the man as a valet. The latter was mad with joy, and though he was a rather fat, middle-aged man, he behaved like a child, playing at liberty, and did no valeting of any sort. He subsequently served Law well until they reached Constantinople; there he made the acquaintance of Persians, and Law noticed that he became morose and unhappy. At last one day the valet took up his courage and asked his employer what would become of him when he was too old to work? Law was rather embarrassed. "You see," the man went on, "as a slave I would have been looked after until I died. What will *you* do with me?" A new embarrassment. The upshot of it all was that the man begged Law to let him return to Persia and slavery. He did so, and Law was fortified in his belief that in Asia slavery is not an unmixed evil.

At Constantinople Law was informed that he must proceed to St Petersburg with the least possible delay. Sir Robert Morier had written to the Foreign Office

that "the energy with which he threw himself into his commercial work here, and the numerous matters he took in hand, with every prospect of success, but which he necessarily left unfinished on his departure, render his presence at an early date very desirable." Accordingly Law started for Moscow, but here his health, which had suffered considerably from the exertions of the past few months, broke down completely, and he was delayed for some time in consequence. He reached St Petersburg in February 1889, after nine months of almost continuous hard travelling.

In May Persian affairs again claimed his attention, for he was required to report upon the proposed Imperial Bank of Persia. A concession had been obtained from the Shah by the Baron Julius de Reuter and others, who thereupon addressed a petition to the Queen in Council for the Bank to be incorporated by Royal Charter. This was eventually granted, and the Imperial Bank is now one of the principal British institutions in Persia, and has taught the Persian traders that—as Law suggested—"their capital may be as safely and more conveniently placed in the hands of a banker than under the hearthstone of their own houses."

He was shortly afterwards summoned to England to attend the Shah, Násir-ud-din, during his visit to this country. The main outlines of the visit are matters of common knowledge. The most picturesque incident was the visit paid to her late Majesty Queen Victoria at Osborne. The potentate whose word was law throughout a country larger than England, France, and Germany put together, had remained curiously unimpressed by the strange sights and experiences which

Western Europe afforded. But he was visibly nervous before the quiet dignity of the Queen, until reassured by the gracious welcome accorded to him. During the Shah's visits to various country-houses, Law, who acted as master of ceremonies, was very much impressed by the Shah's understanding of all real refinement. On one occasion, soon after arriving at a very well-known country seat, he remarked confidentially to Law, in his broken English, "Real gentleman's house this." A curious proof of the usual Oriental mistrust was the way in which the Shah's magnificent jewels were kept during this journey. They were each night put in a handkerchief and confided to a different person.

In spite of his inherent mistrust for foreigners, the Shah liked Law, and the latter both admired the intelligent interest which Násir-ud-din displayed in different subjects, and hoped that his visit would be followed by fruitful results for Persia.

In an article which Law wrote subsequently in 'The Nineteenth Century' he stated that "there are signs of an awakening to progress in Persia, and signs of an awakening of foreign interest in the affairs of that country. The opening of the Karun should give an impetus to trade from the south, and the proposed establishment of an Imperial Persian Bank should provide capital to assist industrial and mercantile enterprise in all parts of the country. Opportunities exist for those who know how to profit by them, but undoubtedly there will be difficulties to contend with. Perseverance, patience, and tact must be shown, and indeed all those qualities which enabled Englishmen to establish their trade elsewhere in the East in the face of greater obstacles than any which will confront them

in Persia. The tendency to rely for business success too much on Government help must be checked. Individual enterprise and determination have always won the day for Englishmen of the old school, while concessions and Government protection are the only ideas which occur to the mind of the modern Bourse speculator. I would not appear to despise on all occasions the value of a concession, nor to infer that a business man may never legitimately seek the protection of his government in his business difficulties, but I am anxious to strongly express my opinion that there is good employment for industry and capital in Persia without concessions, and that under present circumstances there are many difficulties in the way of either obtaining or working any new concessions. I would not recommend any one to start with the expectation of rapidly developing a large business, but I would recommend careful preliminary investigation and subsequent perseverance. In conclusion, I will only repeat the old English proverb, 'Strike whilst the iron is hot.' I think the iron is now hot in Persia, and I hope to see my countrymen striking with precision, caution, and perseverance."

CHAPTER IV.

1890-1892.

CONSTANTINOPLE—BRITISH TRADE ABROAD.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH once declared that whosoever commands the trade commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself. This exactly expresses Law's views with regard to British trade. Before his appointment as Commercial Attaché he had considered various means of assisting our foreign trade, and he had now found numerous opportunities of testing his theories.

In the autumn following the Shah's visit he was called upon to deliver an address before the London Chamber of Commerce. His old ally at the Imperial Institute, Sir Frederick Abel, C.B., presided, and he took as his subject "The Value of Home Commercial Organisations to British Trade Abroad." His remarks were based upon the experience of two years of almost continuous travel in Russia, Persia, and Turkey, during which he was inquiring into commercial affairs, and especially into such questions as related to British trade in those countries. In Russia, owing to the fiscal policy which in many cases levied almost prohibitive duties on foreign

goods, there had been comparatively little to learn with regard to British trade, except with regard to the carrying trade from the Baltic and the Black Sea. But in Persia and Turkey a liberal fiscal policy gave great opportunities to the foreigner to push and sell the manufactures of his country. In the provinces bordering on the Caspian Law had found that the Russian trader combined the geographical advantage which he enjoyed with a closer knowledge of the requirements and tastes of the people than his English competitors. The reason was that the Armenians, who pushed the Russian business, were to be found in most provincial towns, and were in close communication with their principals at Moscow. In Turkey, too, the traders of other countries were, generally speaking, better represented than ourselves, and the British merchants in the country took a gloomy view of the future.

Law remarked that formerly, whenever an active foreigner was found pushing his trade in these countries he was almost certain to be an Englishman. But now the English agent was at best one in a crowd, and often conspicuous only by his absence. Yet the most general complaint in commercial circles in London was the absence of local trade information, which must necessarily be collected in the field which it is desired to exploit. The want of local information, and of good commercial travellers to collect it, appeared to be due to the difficulty experienced by firms in England in finding young men fit and capable for the work.

The first essential qualification was a knowledge of foreign languages: the second was an adaptability to foreign ways. But the young Englishman, whose education had given him the necessary command of

foreign languages, generally failed to adapt himself to the conditions and circumstances of life abroad. He was too comfortable at home to desire to go. Although his salary would be greater, he would be called upon to make corresponding sacrifices. The result generally was that if he went he was in a bad temper with everything around him, and thought himself far too important a personage to take the trouble and display the patience in ingratiating himself into the good graces of his customers which ensured success for his foreign competitors. If Englishmen, accustomed to less comfort at home, and feeling a keener necessity for earning their own fortunes, had the same educational advantages with regard to languages as existed in Germany and Austria, they would undoubtedly prove as good business agents abroad as their rivals, and the increase to British trade would be considerable.

He then considered the suggestion, so frequently made, that the Government should supply local trade information with regard to foreign countries. In his opinion the Government had done what it could by calling upon its consular officers for annual trade reports, encouraging the preparation of special reports on matters of particular interest, and publishing them at a nominal price. His own appointment, too, might be regarded as a further indication of the anxiety of the Government to add to our commercial interests abroad. But neither consular reports nor a Commercial Attaché could take the place of a detailed information on special subjects which the traveller for a particular firm could supply. The area of the inquiry was too wide for an official to give the requisite attention to detail. His official position constituted a further difficulty, for it was

often a delicate matter for him to avoid the appearance of giving greater assistance or information to one firm than to another. He had nothing to guide him as to the importance of information for which he might be asked, or as to the seriousness of the applicant. For example, he might receive "a neatly written letter on nice note-paper politely asking in well-expressed English for general information regarding the boot trade in Russia, and for all necessary details relating to the production and quality of leather used in that country. This might have come from some serious business man who had written in haste and unmindful of the necessity of giving the consul, who knew nothing about boots commercially, more special lines on which to work. On the other hand, it might have come from a young dreamer who entertained the illusory project of writing an article on boots for 'The Nineteenth Century.'"

Thus he regarded it as an especially important and useful function of the Chambers of Commerce to constitute themselves, as far as possible, the mouthpieces for serious inquiries for commercial information from the various trades which they specially represented. An inquiry coming through any of these bodies would have a guarantee for its serious character, and the secretaries of the chamber would have the time to put such inquiries as they might transmit to the Government in a concise and businesslike form, and thus economise the time of the consul and avoid improper questions.

There were others ways, too, in which the different Chambers of Commerce might be profitably employed. Though in the class of goods which are sold in large quantities and run into large sums of money the British merchants did fairly well, yet in expensive specialities,

such as fine cutlery, saddlery, watches, guns, or stationery—in which they excelled at home—they seemed to be almost excluded from foreign markets. The reason suggested was that first-class cutlers, watch-makers, and others did not see their way to covering the heavy expense of sending out travellers to offer their goods, for which there could only be a limited demand, until the foreigner had learnt by continual experience that he would obtain the fullest extra value for the comparatively high price which he would be asked to pay. It might, however, be possible, with the help of the Chambers of Commerce, to organise trading companies on a solid basis, to take agencies for such manufactures, and to establish show-rooms for first-class English specialities in some of the more important centres abroad.

He also strongly advocated the formation of a great Commercial Intelligence Department in London, through the agency of the Imperial Institute, upon the lines which he had suggested two years before. This he hoped would secure the support of the Agents-General of the Colonies, the Chambers of Commerce, and the various Imperial Departments interested throughout the Empire.

A few months after his address to the London Chamber of Commerce he was called upon to give evidence before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Civil Service, with reference to the relations of the Diplomatic and Consular Services. The full Report of the Commission, which may be said to deal with the whole of the external official business of the Empire, was issued shortly afterwards.

Law first gave evidence with regard to the com-

mercial side of the Diplomatic and Consular Services, and their connection with one another. His own duties brought him constantly in touch with the representatives of either service. Ordinary commercial matters were generally treated locally by a consul, but when there was no proper consular representation, or the local authorities were unable to settle questions, they came on to the Embassy at St Petersburg and were undertaken by himself as Commercial Attaché. As there was only one Commercial Attaché for Eastern Europe, it was impossible for him to do all that ought to be done. But it would be difficult to increase the number of Commercial Attachés, on account of the salary which men who were competent for the post would require. In his opinion a different remedy might be provided. There should be in every Embassy a secretary who had shown special competence for commercial work; he should receive extra pay, and devote himself mainly to that work. Such men should have spent at least a year in the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office, in order to gain the necessary training. They would co-operate with the Commercial Attachés, and their duties would not overlap those of the consuls, whose work must always be purely local and concerned only with the local authorities.

As regards the consular service, he considered that in some very important places we were not properly represented, and we were not represented as other Powers were. For example, in Libau, where two hundred British ships went in the course of the year, the allowance to the vice-consul was £10, which, as Law remarked, would scarcely pay for his pens, ink, and paper. Again, in Moscow we paid a trading

vice-consul £80 a-year, whereas the Austrian and German Consuls were government officials drawing £670 and £600 respectively.

This led him to contrast the relative merits of the trading or commercial consul, generally a native of the place in which he lived, and the *consul de carrière*, a public servant in the sole employ of the Government of the country which he represented. From his own experience Law declared that from the ordinary commercial consul he could get nothing unless he asked him, and then information was supplied as a favour. The *consul de carrière* always hoped that his report might do him some good in his own profession. The duties of a consul might be described as diplomatic and commercial. As regards what may be termed the diplomatic side, the native trader who acted as British vice-consul was useless. On the commercial side, if he were an honest man, he might be of some value, but even here he was hindered by his own commercial interests. He was always afraid lest anything he said should prejudice him in the eyes of the authorities in his own country. In the countries of Eastern Europe he could never give full satisfaction to his own government and to us. Motives of economy rendered it necessary to employ a certain number of native vice-consuls. They had their uses—they could attend to local detail business, and to some extent smooth difficulties with local authorities, but they could never fill the place of a *consul de carrière*.

For these reasons Law advocated a system of groups in the consular service proper, on the lines which had already been adopted in the Levant, and in China and Japan. In most countries it was absolutely essential

that the consul should have an intimate knowledge of the language and the customs of the people. It was therefore desirable that for the purposes of the consular service certain countries which had some similarity, either close political and commercial connection or similarity in the language and manners of the people, should be grouped together. A consul should enter upon his career in a particular group, and be promoted in that group, instead of being moved promiscuously from one part of the world to another.

He subsequently developed this idea, and produced a detailed scheme for the reorganisation of the consular service. He divided the different countries of the world into six separate groups, each with a proper complement of Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, and assistants. He laid down proper subjects for entrance, qualifying, and promotion examinations, and regulations with regard to pay and pension. Provision was also made for the employment of the ordinary trading vice-consul, where suitable, within any of the groups. A Commercial Attaché would be appointed for each consular group, assisted by a junior secretary at the more important embassies and legations, who would receive an extra salary for special attention to commercial affairs and continuous correspondence with the Commercial Attaché. These secretaries would be required to pass a qualifying examination, and would be appointed for a term of five years: they would supply the Commercial Attachés of the future. If possible the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office should be strengthened, and the head of the Department should have the rank of Assistant Under-Secretary of State. The staff should be increased, and a special

official appointed to superintend all commercial publications, and to produce a well-arranged triennial summary for each group in the consular service.

In the spring of 1890 Law returned to Constantinople, where he was associated with an Ambassador whose remarkable personality had won for him a more influential position in the Near East than had been enjoyed by any representative of Great Britain since Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Sir William White and the Commercial Attaché had much in common. Both were men of unusual force of character, and neither of them had graduated in the ordinary diplomatic school. The outlines of Sir William White's interesting career are sufficiently well known. His childhood was spent mainly abroad, and a brief residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, was followed by fourteen years on a small farm in Poland. At the age of thirty-three he obtained a subordinate post in the British Consular Service, and held successive appointments in the smaller States of Eastern Europe. He was an untiring worker, accepted responsibilities and overcame obstacles: he had long to wait for his opportunity, but it came in the end. He was appointed British Ambassador at Constantinople at a somewhat critical period in the history of the Ottoman Empire, and achieved an extraordinary success in his conduct of affairs.

But it is said that he remained wholly unaffected by greatness—a big man, of commanding presence, and a brusque friendliness of manner. He slept little and had no recreations; indifferent to party politics, and intolerant of officialdom, he was a man of great width of view and unflinching courage, one who could take a strong line and admire strength in others.

It should be here mentioned that on his first visit to Constantinople Law had written a Memorandum on the Financial Situation in Turkey, which had been forwarded by Sir William White to the Foreign Office and had won high praise from Lord Salisbury. At that time there was every indication that the financial difficulties of Turkey had once more passed from the chronic to the acute stage. A long tale of official corruption, unpaid salaries, and desperate measures taken to secure small sums of ready money,—all pointed to an impending crash. Yet, as Law observed, a somewhat similar state of things had existed for the past thirty years, within which period the Government had been declared bankrupt, had borne the expenses of a European war, expended large sums in armaments, and lost provinces, and still in some mysterious way contrived to carry on. Indeed, Ottoman finance, like the Empire itself, exhibited the curious phenomenon of a perpetual rake's progress, with the final scene indefinitely delayed.

In some respects the gravity of the situation was exaggerated, and for this the officials at Constantinople were to blame. The man who "continually, indiscriminately, and often faithlessly, begs for small sums urgently required at the moment, loses credit far quicker than the man who faces the position, calculates what sum would be required to clear him, and seeks with discrimination a loan large enough to free him from the claims of numerous petty creditors." For years a succession of Finance Ministers had been "going round with the hat," but no loan had been sufficient to afford more than momentary relief. The attention of Europe was continually drawn to the empty treasury and the unpaid officials at the capital, and it was not generally noticed

that salaries were being paid in the provinces, and that the aggregate revenue of the country was steadily increasing. The various bankers and merchants at Constantinople were also avowed pessimists. The Government no longer entrusted its business to them, having paid tolerably high for the privilege of doing so in the past, with the result that they had joined the ranks of its detractors.

Law considered that the situation was not beyond repair. The decentralisation of revenue due to the vilayet system, and the earmarking of certain sources of revenue for special purposes, had left comparatively small sums under the immediate control of the Finance Minister to meet Imperial as opposed to local expenditure. This fact, in conjunction with bad management, produced a succession of minor defalcations at the capital. But if the entire revenue and expenditure were placed in one category, the total annual deficit would not amount to more than £2,000,000. This was not sufficient—in the absence of abnormal conditions produced by war or insurrection—to provoke an immediate crisis. But in view of the possibility of such a crisis, which would necessitate an international intervention to restore financial order, and secure some fresh protection for international financial interests, it became important to consider the defects of the existing system in some detail.

Law did not regard the arrangement of the Foreign Debt, created in 1881, as wholly satisfactory. The object was to obtain entire control of the collections of revenues sufficient to meet the annual claims of the bondholders. The means adopted—the establishment of the Imperial Ottoman Debt Administration—had

crippled the external credit and the internal prestige of the Ottoman Government. The same object might have been achieved, without creating a new administration, by entrusting the task to the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which had been established to act as cashier to the Turkish Ministry of Finance. The Bank should control the collection of revenue, and effect payments authorised by the Finance Minister. Full legislative and administrative authority would then have remained with the Government, while security could have been obtained for the bondholders, by instructing the Bank that their claims must be a first charge on all revenues and must be paid before other items set out in the Budget. If necessary, the accounts of the Bank might be audited by a small International Commission.

The existing system produced no less than four separate sets of officials—viz., those belonging to the Finance Minister, the Debt Administration, the Régie, and the Bank—and they often worked in opposition to one another. In consequence the State was deprived of any benefit from the elasticity of revenue, its credit was shattered, and a comparatively small deficit became a matter of undue importance. The merit of the system was to be found in the *personnel* of the Debt Administration, which had conferred an enormous boon upon the Turkish Empire. It had trained a body of nearly 5000 employés—mainly Mussulman subjects of the Porte—to habits of methodical, accurate, and honest work, and thereby shown to the world that a Mussulman administration was perfectly capable of adapting itself to the requirements of an advancing civilisation.

On his return to Constantinople Law was required to report upon various commercial subjects, and notably

upon the transit trade through the Ottoman Ports of Salonica, Constantinople, and Trebizond. He pointed out that each of these three ports had to compete for a share of the transit trade to markets to which goods could be conveyed by land routes lying wholly outside the limits of the Ottoman Empire. If merchandise were conveyed by the land routes, it paid no customs duties to the Ottoman Government, and provided no employment for its subjects. If every possible facility were provided at the three ports, the British carrying trade would gain thereby, and British goods would be enabled to compete with those of foreign countries on favourable terms in the distant markets of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Thus the interests of Turkey and Great Britain both demanded the encouragement of the transit trade at the three ports. But there were no proper bonded warehouses where merchants could open and repack their goods: at Salonica and Trebizond the quay accommodation was inadequate, the railway connection was bad, and trade was hampered by futile and vexatious customs regulations. In this respect Trebizond was the greatest sufferer, a fact which had an important bearing on British trade, for in order to compete with the Russians for the markets of North Persia the British merchant was forced to send his goods by the Trebizond-Tabriz route to Teheran—a distance of over 1000 miles. Proposals for providing improved means of communication between the Caspian and the Persian capital were under consideration by Russia, and it was essential that corresponding improvements should be made in the Trebizond route.

In the same year Law was appointed to act as British Delegate in the negotiations for the proposed new

Treaties of Commerce with Turkey. The various issues to be decided are now ancient history, but a graphic picture of the discussions between the representatives of the Ottoman Government and the European Powers has been preserved in a few private letters which Law wrote from Constantinople at this time. At an early stage in the negotiations he wrote that "we have three hard pills to shove down the Turks' throats, and failure is pretty generally prophesied—but it will be my treaty, and I mean to succeed. White, thank heavens, is afraid of nothing, and we shall stick out where necessary. I had squared the Russians to work with me in St Petersburg. The Austrians here received orders to work with us, and the Italian Ambassador, with whom I used to play whist last time I was here, is already consulting me. The Germans have gone round the corner and made an agreement on their own account, but I don't think they will make much out of it. I must keep my Anglo-Austro-Russo-Italian team together, and as I fancy I know more about the subject than any of them, I mean to keep them all in hand. It's a glorious entertainment to sit down to."

These expectations were speedily fulfilled. Two months later he wrote, "I am afraid we have come to a considerable stick with the treaty. We are reaching the really difficult questions, where I shall have quite as much trouble with my own side as with the Turks. The responsibility is really very great. I feel I am alone, and the Austrians and Italians depend on me, as I have got far ahead with the Turks and circumstances have put the lead entirely in my hands. I don't in the least funk the responsibility, but I feel how serious it is for me, and how much depends on my pulling through fairly success-

fully. . . . The Turks swear by me now, for we have had eight meetings without my ever permitting an unpleasant word. The question is, have I by this time impressed them with the fact that I mean exactly what I say, besides impressing them with my desire to be absolutely fair to them. I know I shall have to show a very strong attitude on some questions at our next meeting. What will be the result? So far I have given away nothing that I announced my intention to have, but I have been able to make it comparatively easy for them to give in. Future questions are much harder."

Each successive stage in the deliberations added to the reputation which Law had made for himself. His last letter briefly states that a moment had arrived when he almost despaired of success. "When I proposed my solution to the Austrian, Russian, and Italian Ambassadors, none of them seemed quite to take it, but I hoped for most with the Russians. The Austrians took their own line and were awfully worsted. What was my surprise two days ago to learn that they had suddenly turned round and adopted my proposals, which are accepted by the Turks, and the great difficulty of the Treaty settled. Now we shall all have to follow suit, and I have won the day. It is a great triumph, but not a soul will ever realise what has happened."

A further difficulty was raised by the attitude of the Debt Administration to the proposed Treaty. It was feared that the interests of the bondholders might be prejudiced by the abolition of various duties under the terms of the Treaty, and that it would also produce fresh causes of friction between the Debt Administration and the Government. Law did not share this view, and thanks mainly to the conciliatory line adopted by the

members of the Debt Administration, a reasonable compromise was arrived at. His attention was then called to the effect upon the trade of Cyprus of the new tariff to be established by the Treaty. The alternative suggestions were to apply the new tariff to Cyprus as for the rest of the Ottoman Empire, to effect an arrangement similar to that made between Turkey and Egypt, or to place Cyprus upon the same footing as any integral portion of the British Empire. Law inclined to the second course, which was ultimately adopted.

Several months of the following year, 1891, were occupied in compiling an exhaustive Report on the Administration and Organisation of the Consulate-General at Constantinople, which was required by the Foreign Office. He dealt in detail with the Consular Department and its staff of Dragomans, the Consular Courts, the accounts of the Consulate, the Hospital, the Sailors' Home, and the Prison. He also suggested various practical reforms under these different heads.

Law's views with regard to British policy in Eastern Europe were strengthened by the experience which he gained at Constantinople. In the year 1889 he had published in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' under the *nom de plume* of "Kurios," the first of three articles entitled "Current Influences on Foreign Politics," which were widely read and commented on. He pointed out that in modern Europe dynastic considerations and the will of the individual exercised little influence over political affairs. The days of the capricious autocrat, the marriage alliance, and the intriguing diplomatist, were past: even in Russia and Turkey the old conditions were changing. The foreign policy of modern States was directed by the selfish instincts of the various peoples,

each seeking to further what they considered to be their own material interests. Statesmanship was taking the place of the old-fashioned diplomacy, and a successful Foreign Minister had to study the necessities of his own country, and the needs and ambitions of others, rather than the personal characters of their rulers.

With this end in view he proceeded to make a critical examination of the interests of the various European nations, and the nature of the armed forces available in order to secure those ends. A similar course had been followed by other writers, notably by Sir Charles Dilke, and "Outidanos," whose article in 'The Contemporary Review' was sometimes attributed to Mr Gladstone. There were many points upon which Law disagreed with their conclusions. "Outidanos" had held that it would be a mistake for Italy to join Germany and Austria, because these three Powers would not possess the preponderance requisite to enable them to impose their will upon France and Russia, who might be regarded as the bellicose Powers, and so form a league of peace. In Law's opinion both "Outidanos" and Sir Charles Dilke had failed to make an accurate estimate of the different armaments, and thereby vitiated their whole argument. "Outidanos" had taken his numbers from popular sources, and had not considered their actual value as fighting units. Sir Charles Dilke did not appear to have the necessary special knowledge of military matters. For example, when speaking of English cavalry equipment he had ridiculed the custom of wearing the sword and placing the carbine in a bucket attached to the saddle. Law observed that the experience of trotting or galloping with a carbine slung on his back would probably have modified his views.

Law's own account of the European armies bears the marks of close research and an accurate knowledge of the subject. The two questions which were the dominant ones at this time originated in the desire of France to recover Alsace and Lorraine, and in Russia's immediate ambitions in the East. Dealing first with the one which primarily concerned the Western States, he considered that in view of the Austro-German alliance, France would not attempt hostilities without the support of Russia. This was recognised in Germany, and explained the various attempts made by Bismarck to cultivate friendly relations with the northern Power. For the same reason he had persuaded Italy to join the Austro-German alliance, though her attitude in the event of hostilities might only be one of armed neutrality. To make this alliance a real league of peace, the support of the English fleet was essential. The alliance would then be strong enough to impose its will upon any possible peace-breaker. "Outidanos" had been opposed to our committing ourselves in any way. Law held that we should at least let it be known that the power of England would be promptly thrown into the scale against any marauding disturber of European tranquillity.

Turning to the Eastern Question, he first examined the growth of what may be described as the commercial spirit in Russia. When Russia first joined the European nations, her people were mainly animated by religious sentiment—the legacy of their struggles to preserve their nationality. But a warlike spirit survived long after all danger from the Mussulman had passed away, and was kept alive by the natural desire to recover from her old enemies the fertile territories in eastern Europe.

Presently the doctrine of Pan-Slavism was propounded as an additional incentive to Russian arms: the moujik was now urged to free his brothers, the Christian Slavs, who were reported to be groaning beneath the Moham-medan yoke. The sequel was the Russo-Turkish War of 1876 and a considerable accretion of territory to the Tsar's dominions.

To the superficial observer, Pan-Slavism still appeared as an active force, but Law realised that its power had departed. The peasant soldier had discovered that the lot of the oppressed Bulgar, whom he was called upon to help, was in many respects a happier one than his own. The liberated States began to show a regrettable spirit of independence. It became increasingly clear that no Pan-Slavist programme could be devised which would be acceptable both to the Slav communities and the Russian autocracy. By this time it had been virtually superseded in Russia by the modern material force of commercial greed, which fostered dreams of untold wealth to be acquired by the possession of India, and by making the Black Sea into a Russian lake. The new policy of "Russia for the Russians" was now interpreted by each section of the community in Russia to suit its own ends. It meant wider markets for the Moscow man, lucrative appointments for the official classes, and for the peasant a settling of old scores with the Jews, the Poles, and other aliens, who enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity than he did himself. It only needed the co-operation of an ambitious military party to render this commercial greed a serious menace to the peace of the world.

Turkey was the country immediately threatened, and

in the event of hostilities it was clear that she would have none of the strategical advantages which she enjoyed in the last war. The complete collapse of her naval power since that time had changed the whole position. Even a European ally could not save her Asiatic provinces. It now appeared that if attacked her only possible safeguard would be the active assistance and co-operation of England. It was sometimes asked, Why should England concern herself with the future of the Armenians, or with the fate of Constantinople? As to the first, Law observed that it was quite immaterial to England whether the Armenians suffer under oppression organised by Russian officials, according to the most approved forms of modern civilisation, or whether they suffer from the barbarous treatment meted out by the culpable carelessness of the Turkish authorities. But it was of vital importance to England that Turkey should remain in possession of Constantinople. Otherwise the Black Sea would become a Russian lake; our trade with Asia Minor, Persia, and even with the more eastern of the Balkan States, would be destroyed, and in the event of hostilities with Russia in Asia, we should be deprived of our best base for offensive operations. It was hardly putting it too high to say that a Turkish alliance was nearly as important for England as an English alliance was for Turkey.

Of the other European Powers, Austria was bound to resist the further advance of Russia in the Near East: Germany would naturally support Austria, whereas France would be drawn towards Russia. A small but valuable ally to the opponents of Russia

would be found in Roumania. Turning to the Asiatic States, Law admitted that Russian influence was predominant in Persia, and Afghanistan could at best be considered a doubtful factor. But in China he discerned a potential ally of great value in a prolonged struggle, such as he considered inevitable in any conflict between England and Russia. He admitted that it was impossible to make any accurate estimate of her strength and resources, but he drew attention to the preparations which had been made by China when anticipating hostilities with Russia in Kuldja. An enormous host had been assembled in the west of the more populous provinces, ready like hordes of Tchengis Khan to spend three years if necessary on the road to its destination. The Chinese soldiers even took with them seed and agricultural implements to sow, cultivate, and harvest crops on the way. In a long and exhausting warfare allies of this kind were not to be despised.

Thus, having regard not only to the Eastern Question, but also to that of Alsace-Lorraine in Western Europe, there could be no doubt as to the proper policy for England to pursue. Law was opposed to injudicious Chauvinism, but he held that Russian ambitions in the East constituted a real menace to England, and timely steps should be taken to defend our trade and dominion. A firm and dignified attitude should be adopted on the question of Russian encroachments in Central Asia. Russia must be given to understand that any wilful infraction of existing arrangements would be considered a *casus belli*. She was compelled to keep a considerable force on her western frontier; she could not afford to weaken it

in order to bolster up an ambitious policy in the Far East.

Englishmen must also be brought to realise that a purely defensive policy could never succeed, particularly when dealing with Oriental States. A counter-attack would be necessary, and for this reason it was essential to consider the position of Turkey. The Turks, if aided by British resources and organisation, would be in a position to deliver an effective blow. England's interest was, therefore, to maintain such relations with Turkey as should prepare her rulers to seize any offered opportunity of strengthening themselves by an alliance against Russia. It would certainly be to the interest of Turkey to do so, but it would be difficult to make the Turks see their true interests, and unless our diplomacy could achieve more influence at Constantinople than it had previously enjoyed, the attitude of Turkey might be uncertain.

But even without a Turkish alliance there was no reason to be apprehensive of the result of a conflict with Russia. As long as the Indian frontier was safe, Russia could not damage England, whereas England could always damage Russia in more than one quarter. There was no comparison between the resources of the two countries, and though the struggle might be a long one, there could be no doubt as to the final issue.

Another episode that occurred about this time speaks most eloquently to the position Law had now won, to the exceptional confidence in his ability reposed in him alike by his own most able chief, Sir R. B. Morier, and by perhaps the greatest of Russian Finance Ministers, M. Wishniegradsky. In a private letter to

the Ambassador, dated November 16th, 1890, when the results of the Baring crisis were still uncertain, Law wrote as follows:—

ST PETERSBURGH,

November 16th, 1890.

DEAR SIR ROBERT MORIER,—I had some conversation with M. Wishniegradsky this afternoon concerning the extraordinary condition of affairs in the London money market. He said that he much wished he could go to London himself for a few days, as he thought he could arrange an important business with the Bank of England. He gave me an outline of his ideas, which would include the keeping of a large sum out of his reserves constantly with the Bank, binding himself for six months at a time, and one month's notice of withdrawal before the expiration of each term. Also, he would give the Bank the business of encashing the drafts which he buys from time to time on the Exchange here, and which form his principal means of remitting abroad.

It was perfectly clear from his manner, and from the confidential nature of his conversation, that M. Wishniegradsky wished in some way for my assistance, and I consequently said that I should be glad if by any chance I could be of service to him in carrying out his ideas. He then said at once, could you go to England for me and act as intermediary with the Bank? I replied that I should be very glad, if I received your permission, which I thought quite possible. He made an appointment for 4 P.M. on Friday next, to give me precise details and instructions, if I should be permitted to act for him. I believe that the Government are always

desirous to support the Bank of England, and it appears to me that, especially at the present moment, it would be of great importance to the Bank, and therefore to the London commercial community, that some such arrangement as is suggested by M. Wishniegradsky should be carried out. With this idea I trust I have not done wrong in leading M. Wishniegradsky to consider it probable that I might be allowed to act for him, though, of course, without having your Ex.'s full approval, I have in no way bound myself to him.

E. L.

Sir Robert Morier naturally enough agreed at once that Law should place himself entirely at M. Wishniegradsky's disposal in the matter and proceed to England at once if necessary. The Bank of England was informed by Law at Wishniegradsky's request of the latter's willingness to remit £1,500,000 in gold to London, and after the exchange of a few telegrams the proposals of the Bank for receiving this sum were accepted and the gold sent. Law meantime reached London as the accredited, though private, representative of the Russian Minister of Finance, who wrote under date 15/27th November as follows:—

Copie.

MINISTÈRE DES FINANCES
CHANCELLERIE
DES OPÉRATIONS DE CREDIT.

ST PÉTERSBOURG,
le 15/27 Novembre 1890.

No. 13245.

MONSIEUR LE GOUVERNEUR,—Vous savez probablement que MM. Baring frères et Cie., aux dates des 3/15 Décembre à c., 3/15 Janvier et 3/15 Février 1891, doivent

verser à l'ordre de la Banque de l'État à St Pétersbourg trois montants de £500,000 chacun, soit ensemble £1,500,000.

Cette somme devait être affectée à renforcer les ressources métalliques de notre Banque, mais, en présence des difficultés que traverse actuellement votre place, j'ai jugé qu'il y avait lieu d'ajourner la réalisation de toute mesure qui pourrait déterminer des retraits d'or de la Banque d'Angleterre et je crois entrer dans vos vues en recherchant les moyens de laisser sur votre marché non seulement les £1,500,000 susmentionnées, mais l'intégralité des soldes dont la Banque de l'État et le Trésor Impérial resteront créditeurs chez MM. Baring frères le 3/15 Février 1891—£1,000,000 environ.

M'étant informé récemment auprès de Messrs N. M. Rothschild et fils des dispositions qui pourraient être prises dans cet ordre d'idées, j'ai tiré de la correspondance échangée avec ces messieurs la conclusion que l'institution à la tête de laquelle vous êtes placé consentirait peut-être à encaisser, pour le compte du Gouvernement Impérial, les trois versements susindiqués, ainsi que le solde dont MM. Baring frères resteront comptables au 3/15 Février, et à bonifier, sous une forme ou sous une autre, un intérêt sur cet ensemble d'environ £2,500,000.

Cette combinaison répondant entièrement au but que je me propose et qui consiste à faciliter de tout mon possible le retour de votre marché à son état normal, j'ai l'honneur de vous prier, Monsieur le Gouverneur, de vouloir bien me faire savoir si vous seriez disposé à m'accorder pour les sommes susmentionnées des conditions analogues à celles qui nous ont été faites pour les £1,500,000 dont la Banque de l'État vous a effectué

l'envoi tout dernièrement ou si vous préféreriez ouvrir au Gouvernement Impérial un compte courant productif d'intérêt.

Dans le dernier cas, je vous serais reconnaissant de me faire connaître, en détail, les conditions auxquelles le compte fonctionnerait.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Gouverneur, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

(Signé) WISHNIEGRADSKY.

The conduct of the ensuing negotiations was left entirely to Law, who with admirable clearness transmitted and explained the views and conditions of the contracting parties, with the result that on the 9th December Wishniegradsky telegraphed to the Governor of the Bank of England definitely accepting his proposals for receiving the further sum of £2,440,000 due to the Russian Government.

The arrangement was, in brief, that this sum should be withdrawn from Messrs Baring and transferred to the Bank of England in monthly instalments of £500,000. Each sum to be deposited with the Bank for a term of six months certain, and the term to be renewable for another six months, unless definite notice of withdrawal were given one month before the expiration of the first term. The Bank to allow interest at a rate $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent below the official quotation, but with a maximum limit of 4, and a minimum limit of 2 per cent.

This arrangement was materially useful to the Bank, which as a guarantor of the Baring liquidation would in any case have to find the money for the Russian Government. It would now transfer the fixed sums to its own books as a matter of account, with the assurance that no

sudden or large demand could be made on its resources in connection with the business.

In his memorandum on the subject Law records with satisfaction that both M. Wishniegradsky and Mr Lidderdale had shown a large-minded business spirit in dealing with these matters, and that there had been a complete absence of haggling and bargaining.

We have direct testimony to prove that Law's conduct of the negotiations was highly appreciated on both sides. Mr Lidderdale, whose exertions in the Baring crisis brought him well-merited fame and honour, was not slow to acknowledge the services rendered, while Wishniegradsky wrote (21st January 1891):—

Janvier 21, 1891.

TRÈS CHER MONSIEUR LAW,—Il y a huit jours, j'ai reçu de la part de M. le Gouverneur de la Banque d'Angleterre une lettre, qui définit complètement les rapports qui devront exister entre le Trésor Impérial et la Banque de Russie d'un côté, et la Banque d'Angleterre de l'autre côté. Les rapports tels qu'ils sont constatés par la dite lettre reposent sur les principes de la plus stricte équité et sur la sérieuse attention vouée aux intérêts des deux partis contractants, de sorte que je ne puis qu'être satisfait au plus haut degré de l'issue des pourparlers, qui ont eu lieu à la fin de l'année passée entre M. Lidderdale et mon administration.

Je me fais le plus agréable devoir de vous en informer dès le moment, que notre accord avec la Banque d'Angleterre est devenu un fait accompli, et je saisis cette occasion pour reconnaître la part considérable que vous avez prise dans ces pourparlers, et les grands efforts couronnés du plus plein succès que vous avez fait pour

expliquer à Londres notre situation actuelle, et amener l'issue favorable des pourparlers mentionnées plus haut.

Veillez donc, très cher Monsieur Law, agréer ma reconnaissance la plus vive pour les grands services que vous avez rendus dans cette affaire, ainsi que l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

(Signé) WISHNIEGRADSKY.

Sir Robert Morier in turn had reason to congratulate himself on having at his elbow so able a subordinate, and his admiration and liking for Law rose higher than ever.

CHAPTER V.

1892-1896.

GREECE—ASIA MINOR—ITALY—BULGARIA.

DURING the first forty-six years of his life, the one country in which Law does not appear to have taken any interest was Greece. So unlikely did it seem to him that any one should ever associate his name with Greece, that he actually chose a Greek pseudonym to conceal the authorship of some articles he wrote. Yet nowadays it is with Greece more than any other country that his name is inseparably connected; it was in Greece more perhaps than anywhere that he made history; it was in Greece that the master passion of his life was kindled, and it is in a Greek grave that he now lies buried.

His first visit to the country was not of his own choosing. In 1892 he was preparing to take the first holiday he had had since entering the Diplomatic Service, and he actually started for a walking tour in Ireland; on the very first day, however, he was recalled by a telegram from the Foreign Office ordering him to Greece. He was not more annoyed than amazed. "To

take me from here to Greece! How does one get to that country? I never thought of its existence."

Law had none of the prepossessions in favour of Greece which spring from familiarity with classical literature: he was always ready to acknowledge that Greek had brought him nothing but trouble in his school-days, and that his memories of it were wholly unpleasant. The bent of his own mind was practical and scientific, and he had but little esteem for pure scholarship, which he was prone to confound with pedantry. He judged the Greeks as a modern people, in the same way and by the same standard as he judged the Germans, Italians, or Russians, and this gave the Philhellenic sympathies which he subsequently developed a peculiar value and interest.

But though his judgment of Athens in the nineteenth century was not biassed by the glorious vision of the city of Pericles, he esteemed the Greeks for the pride they take in their great past. He was profoundly indignant with those English and Continental papers, as well as with some great Powers, who in moments of diplomatic embarrassment proffer to the Greeks the extraordinary and wholly unreasonable advice that they should forget their history. That Greeks, against all the instincts of individuals as well as of peoples, should forget their past because of its splendour seemed to him preposterous. In a century which had hailed with sympathy the awakening of every other nationality, it was pitiful folly to suppose that the Greeks could forget the Hellas of classical times, the Empires of Alexander and of Constantinople, the Gospel spread through their tongue, the Renaissance which had been quickened into life by Greek manuscripts and Greek teachers. Could

the Greeks forget the history of human progress merely because their own part in it had been so great? Law had small sympathy for the theory of those Western scholars who contend that neither in language nor in race are the Greeks of to-day the descendants of the old inhabitants of Hellas. Before ever he went to Greece, he had seen Greeks thriving in Egypt, in Roumania, all round the Black Sea ports; and he saw them later in Asia Minor, Bulgaria, and Constantinople—in fact, in all parts of the old Byzantine Empire. This struck him very much, and he would meet arguments drawn from philology and archæology by pointing to the ground and saying: “Here they were, and here they are. They talk to one another and understand each other wherever they are and from wherever they come. What other nation can say as much?”

When Law went to Greece in 1892, the sympathy previously felt for her in Western Europe had sensibly cooled, and she stood in need of friends. A new trend of thought and a fresh combination of interests had consigned to oblivion the enthusiasm which had been inspired by the Greek war of independence, and by the racial vitality which enabled the Hellenes to maintain their nationality unimpaired during nearly 400 years of subjection, and to withstand the Ottoman Empire still unbroken and un mutilated as it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

After the battle of Navarino (20th October 1827), the Kingdom of Greece was brought into existence, but the limitations imposed by the Powers were such as to make prosperity practically unattainable. A glance at the map will convince the reader of this. The rich provinces of the Danube, where the revolutionary movement

had its birth, the biggest as well as the most important islands of the Ægean (Thasos, Lemnos, Mytelene, Chios, Samos, Rhodes, Cyprus, and heroic Crete), and on the mainland Epiros—that land so truly Hellenic—and Thessaly, were left to Turkey; while the Ionian Islands—Corfu, Ithaca, Cephalonia, Santa Maura, and Zante—belonged to Great Britain. Athens itself remained vassal to the Sultan, and the mutilated little kingdom was established with Ægina first, and then Nauplia, as its capital.

The geographical configuration of the country enormously increased the difficulties of the newly-created Government. The modern Kingdom of Greece consists of a short peninsula intersected by numerous bays and inlets of the sea and surrounded by numberless islands. It suffers from the disadvantages that attach to an insular position, with, at the same time, the drawback of having a land frontier to defend. Spain and Italy do, it is true, enjoy great advantage from their peninsular position because their northern frontiers are protected by mountain ramparts which make invasion by land difficult; but no mountains protect the northern frontier of Greece, and at the last demarcation of her boundaries, after an unsuccessful war, it was decided that all the mountain heights, and even the less dominant peaks, should belong to Turkey, and diplomacy invented a special euphemism, "*frontières en bas des pentes*," to describe this novel principle of demarcation. Greece has therefore to maintain her military forces on the footing of a continental country, but in case of war she would have to transport her forces and supplies to the front by sea. The mountainous character of the country further increases the difficulty of military trans-

port and commercial development. Thessaly is the only part of Greece which may by comparison be termed level, but even here the mountains cover a larger area than on the plain. In these circumstances the expense of building roads and railways is enormous, and the State has not as yet been able to undertake the whole of the work, and agriculture, trade, and progress in general have been proportionately retarded.

When all these material difficulties have been frankly realised, it must also be conceded that for the failure of the young kingdom to achieve prosperity the Greeks themselves are in part to blame. After 400 years of subjection they were not fit for a democracy, which of all forms of government is the most difficult, and which postulates a higher standard of political wisdom and self-control among the people than the Greeks then possessed. The dangerous experiment of a constitutional government was tried too soon. Petty party dissensions showed themselves from the first, and proved then, as now, fatal obstacles to the welfare of the country. In more modern times Greece has suffered severely from a constant change of ministry, with an equally constant change of public servants, and from the partiality and political bias of the administration. Yet even when these faults are frankly admitted, it remains true, as Law perceived, that the fundamental obstacle to prosperity was the inadequacy of the new kingdom's area. It is true that since 1829 the boundaries of the Greek State have been widened; after some years of existence, Attica and Bœotia were brought within the pale of the kingdom. In 1863 the Ionian Islands were ceded by Great Britain; in 1878, at the Congress of Berlin, it was decided, thanks

in great measure to France, that Thessaly and part of Epiros should be brought within the limits of the Greek State; but the line of demarcation indicated by the Treaty of Berlin was never actually ratified, and a great part of Epiros is still under Turkish rule. At the present day there are about ten million Greeks in the world, but less than one-third (2,800,000) of them live within the borders of the Greek kingdom. On this little State falls the duty of upholding Hellenic interests, moral as well as political, all over the Levant. The five or six million Greeks in the Turkish Empire, and the Greeks scattered about Egypt, Russia, Roumania, and Bulgaria, look to Athens for diplomatic support. At Athens is the University to which Greeks all over the world resort for higher education. The poverty-stricken kingdom has poured out money like water to assist Greeks wherever they are persecuted and oppressed. In assistance to Crete it is estimated that she has spent no less than £8,000,000 in the last fifty years. When the Bulgarians in 1906 sacked Anchialos, a Greek town within the borders of Bulgaria, in the presence of the Bulgarian police,¹ the survivors found refuge in Athens, and the Greek Government spent a million sterling in settling them in new homes in Thessaly. Well might Mr Allen Upward exclaim: "Poor, generous little kingdom, ever ready with its arms open to afford an asylum to the children of Hellas in distress. The last time I had come to the Piræus I had found its streets swarming

¹ It was this atrocious act of barbarism which caused M. Natchevitch to throw up his post as Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent at Constantinople, because, in his own words, "he was too deeply ashamed to look the world in the face."

with Cretan refugees. Now I come back after ten years, and lo! a fresh burden is laid upon the shoulders of the mother State."

These and many other costly duties have been imposed upon the Greek State by her position as champion of Hellenic interests; it is open to question whether she has always discharged these duties wisely, but she could not have declined them, for the defence of those interests is the reason of her existence. But her material resources are inadequate to the task. The Greek State cannot discharge her obligations to the Greek nation. It may of course be said that a poor State has no business to harbour such grandiose conceptions, and that Governments, like men, must cut their coats according to their cloth: here is the old difference between the idealist and the utilitarian, and it is a difference upon which it is useless to argue. What the statesmen of Greece had to recognise was that this expenditure, justifiable or unjustifiable, had brought the finances of Greece into serious embarrassment. In 1892 the Government found itself faced with a depleted Treasury and an increasing deficit in the annual Budget. The credit of the country was not good, but no effective scheme of fiscal reform could be framed unless fresh capital in the form of a loan could be obtained from abroad. The Prime Minister of the time was M. Tricoupis, the greatest statesman that modern Greece has produced. He had spent a considerable part of his youth in England, and he now took the bold course of approaching the British and French Governments with a request to have the finances of Greece carefully investigated, and a report drawn up which should present an accurate

and unbiassed statement of the situation. Greece would then be in a position to negotiate a loan in Europe. It was for this that Law had received instructions to go to Athens, where he was to be attached to the British Legation and make the necessary investigations. In some respects his task was likely to be an uncongenial one. Though he could count upon the support of M. Tricoupis and his party, his advent was regarded by the general public, and particularly by the Press, as a most untoward and unwelcome event. Foreign interference is always resented in Greece, as elsewhere, so that everything connected with his work, including even his personal appearance, was the subject of sharp criticism in the Athenian papers.

He spent upwards of four months in the country, working without intermission, and succeeded not only in obtaining a detailed knowledge of the Greek finances, but also in conciliating public opinion. All those of whatever degree with whom he was brought in contact realised the disinterestedness of his character and the goodwill and kindness of his nature. He had the good fortune at the outset to win the good opinion of King George, and he subsequently earned the affection and gratitude of the Greek nation. But this affection was not won by telling the Greeks smooth things which they wanted to hear. In his report, Law told the truth with merciless candour. He wisely refused to discuss "the question so hotly debated in Greece as to the persons and measures responsible for the existing conditions of affairs. Undoubtedly the expenses of the army and the general disorganisation of the country produced by political events in 1885-86 were the original causes of evil.

But since that date there has been time and opportunity for improvement, which has not been realised. Briefly, I should be inclined to attribute misfortune to excessive borrowing abroad, involving a charge on the revenue which the country under imperfect financial administration was unable to support, and equally to the laxity of an administration which neglected the proper collection of taxes whilst the balance of trade . . . was steadily against the country." To this disagreeable feature in the administration Law drew pointed attention in several places of his report. "It is said," he wrote, "that Greek patriotic sentiment develops such violence of partisan feeling as to prevent the equitable enforcement of taxation. Political animosity, it is affirmed, is sometimes given forcible expression through the strict demands of tax assessors and collectors, while leniency shown to friends prejudices the Treasury." But the general conclusion which Law formed from an extensive investigation into the resources of the country was favourable, and he rightly laid stress upon one most promising feature in the situation. "In conclusion, I would point to one of the most hopeful features as regards promise of future prosperity for Greece. I refer to the unimpeached and unimpeachable integrity of the statesmen of all political parties as regards the question of seeking personal pecuniary benefit from office. With hardly an exception the politicians who guide the fortunes of the country are men of small private fortune, and the salaries, not exceeding £400 per annum even for the Prime Minister, are certainly no temptation to covet office. It is a fact that while every other accusation and insinuation which political animosity can invent is freely launched at



1891.



1893.

MRS AND MAJOR LAW AT THE TIME OF THEIR MARRIAGE.

1870-1871

political opponents, no whisper is ever heard affecting the universally enjoyed reputation for personal honesty in the conduct of the administration. . . . With a rich soil, a population remarkable for its frugality and honest leaders, reasonable hopes may be entertained of bright prospects for the future of Greece."

To Law himself his short visit to Athens was the most important event in his life, for it was there that he met the daughter of M. Hatsopoulos, who afterwards became his wife. From a private letter of Lady Law's, it appears that they had met two years before. "It was at the German Embassy, of a summer evening, at Therapia, amongst a gay and leisurely party of diplomatists. His stern and thoughtful countenance struck me; he seemed to stand alone, different to all others. 'Who is that man?' I eagerly asked as I saw him advance. 'Law. You do not know Law?' was the reply; 'why, he is one of England's rising men—a very interesting one, too. I must introduce him to you at once,' my host continued, on whose arm I was; but the moment this was said 'Law' had disappeared. I only heard his name mentioned two years afterwards in connection with his arrival at Athens, when I also knew that the immediate welfare of my country depended on him." Law bluntly professed to have forgotten the earlier meeting, but he soon found that the gifted daughter of M. Hatsopoulos was not only an accomplished linguist and an ardent patriot, but was capable of assisting him in his work. Already he had begun to feel the charm of Greek society, and to appreciate the intelligence and patriotism which distinguish the Athenians. According to Lady Law, it was their common love of Greece that first brought them together; she

used to say in after years: "Sir Edward made me a Britisher, but I found him a Philhellene." They became engaged before he left Athens, and were married in the autumn of the following year (1893). The portrait of Lady Law, reproduced on the page opposite, is from a medallion which the Empress Frederick had had struck, and it may serve to convince the reader that not only the language, but also the incomparable beauty of the classical Hellenes still survives among the patrician families of modern Athens. Of Law's passionate devotion to his wife, of his protecting tenderness and chivalry, it would be unbecoming to speak at length; his loving solicitude was poured forth unchecked in letters, which it would be profanity to publish—letters which are the more remarkable, because to his friends he never wrote any but the most curt and business-like notes. Those who only observed how thoughtful he was of her happiness, how mindful of her wishes, and even of her fears and fancies, did not realise that he also found in her the inspiration of his work, and a helpmate who shared all his labours and all his secrets.

Law did not wish their engagement to be published until his report had appeared, as he thought that he might be suspected of partiality. This "Report on the Economical and Financial Position in Greece" was submitted to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by the British Minister at Athens, who called attention to the extreme labour, accuracy, and technical experience which the production of this remarkable document had required. It was subsequently published as a Foreign Office Paper, and also translated into Greek by the Greek Government.



PORTRAIT OF LADY LAW ON A MEDALLION STRUCK FOR THE
EMPRESS FREDERICK. 1894.

It contains a lucid statement of the financial situation in Greece, and certain practical suggestions for meeting the crisis. The revenue and expenditure during the preceding ten years, the Public Debt, the special sources of revenue earmarked for its service, the relation between the amount of bank-notes in circulation and the rate of the sterling exchange, are dealt with in detail. Many of these statistics could only be extracted with difficulty, for the Greek Budget was constructed on the principle of crediting all taxes due in any specific year to that year. Thus a "financial year" might sometimes consist of twenty-two months, because the revenue of the year was calculated on the basis of the assessments made respecting it, and a Finance Minister might be called upon in the winter to make an estimate of the revenue to be derived from crops which would only begin to grow in the following spring.

Law abandoned the practice of using the assessments as a basis, and constructed a trial Budget for the year 1893 on more practical lines from an examination of the actual annual receipts. He made it clear that the difficulties of the Government were brought about, not by a diminishing income, but by undue expenditure, for which the demands of the War Department were mainly responsible. This had led to borrowings in London and elsewhere, and added to the permanent charges on the revenue. An excessive issue of inconvertible bank-notes followed, which at once fell to a discount, and created a premium on gold at Athens. This premium rose steadily, and, as most of the service of the debt was payable in gold, the burden was made heavier: it appeared probable that the country would

soon be unable to meet her engagements without the assistance of foreign capital.

In 1893 taxation was estimated at £1. 10s. 1d. per head of population, which was moderate in comparison to many other European countries. He suggested that it might be increased. Certain reforms in the imposition and collection of new taxes might be introduced at the same time. A new loan he regarded as a necessity, but the operation was to comprise the funding of the floating debt, and the reduction of the note circulation during the three following years. He also made various suggestions with regard to the details of the proposed operation. Law's own views with regard to the situation were summarised in his covering letter which accompanied the report. "If it be held," he said, "that the difficulty is solely due to unsuccessful financial administration, a further question arises—are the resources of the country sufficient, with reasonable care, to meet existing difficulties, or is the financial position so compromised as to be beyond remedy without prejudice to the honour of the Greek nation and the legitimate rights of its creditors?"

"The information contained in the accompanying report may, I hope, be found sufficiently complete and satisfactory to justify the opinion that, with temporary assistance, the present crisis may be tided over, and that proper care in the future may secure the hitherto normal development of the country. Without such care in the future, no temporary assistance can avail to prevent final misfortune."

The issue of the report was anxiously awaited in financial circles in London, on account of the amount of capital invested in Greek bonds. Owing to an official

slip, for which Law could not be held responsible, some intelligence of the contents of the report reached the City before it was actually published, and produced considerable speculation in Greek stocks. This "regrettable incident" was naturally attacked in the daily Press, and Law was subjected to a certain amount of unmerited censure. His report served to restore public confidence in Greece, but the good results which might have been expected were frustrated by the untimely fall of M. Tricoupis' Government.

No sooner was his work in Greece finished than Law was called upon to undertake a flying visit to New York. He did not go in connection with his official duties, but at the instance of business friends, to make a report for the English bondholders of the Hudson Tunnel Railway Company, on the present position and prospects of their undertaking. The Company had been formed for the purpose of constructing a tunnel under the Hudson river, from the Jersey shore to New York, and had got into serious financial difficulties before the tunnel was completed. Law had only a short time available, but he hastened to New York, where he made very thorough investigations, and subsequently compiled an exhaustive report upon the position of the bondholders, the possible uses to which the tunnel—if completed—might be applied, and the probable return on the capital which would be required for that purpose. He decided that it was hopeless to attempt to utilise the tunnel for ordinary railway communication, and discussed various schemes for adapting it for the conveyance of gas pipes, water pipes, pneumatic tubes, telegraph and telephone cables, and for an electric or cable car system of passenger traffic. The general conclusions at which he arrived

were not encouraging, and the subsequent history of the undertaking has shown that they were well founded.

After his marriage in the autumn of 1893, Law returned to St Petersburg, whither his wife followed him a few weeks later. A little incident that happened to her on the way deserves to be recorded in her own words.

“My husband had written to tell me that at the Russian frontier my passage would be made easy, not only by the usual ‘laissez passer’ of the Diplomatic Service, but also by special orders sent by the Russian Foreign Office. Nevertheless, on my arrival at the frontier, I felt very helpless in my ignorance of the language, and I was rather embarrassed by seeing no signs of the officials whom I expected to meet. I was standing on the platform, wondering how to proceed, when suddenly a stout man dressed in black approached me, and putting his hand on my shoulder asked me in broken German: ‘Are you Mrs Law?’ He did not wait for an answer, but, looking at a letter he held in his hand, continued: ‘You are Mrs Law: dark eyes, black hair, white skin—that is what the letter says.’ Rather taken aback, I answered: ‘Yes, I am Mrs Law: who are you?’ To which he replied: ‘I am a Jew—the principal money-changer of this station. He has always been very good to us—I mean your husband.’ (This frank and unusual avowal was in itself strong testimony of the confidence placed in my husband by members of the Jewish faith.) ‘We all love him and will do anything he asks us. I will see you through better than the young officers over there who have orders from the Ministry—he knew that—that’s why he thought of me for you,’ he added with satisfaction. Indeed he saved me every trouble, and when at last I was seated in my

Russian railway carriage, he demanded in his abrupt, but as I now realised, kindly manner: 'Give me all your German money. I will change it for you and give you better change. He knows that too.' And he did. My husband, as the man said, had been very much impressed with the situation of the Jews in Russia; he had lived among them and had soon, in his keen and impartial manner of thinking, realised their wonderful qualities. He always did, both in action and in writing, all in his power for them. The Jewish question was quite new to me, for there are few Jews in Greece, and what I thought and believed of them was the current and superficial opinion prevailing about them. My husband saw this and said: 'I must educate you on this question, and you will change your mind.' He would often say: 'The Jews, if only they were left alone, would soon show that they have every quality, even courage, which last is the quality most frequently denied them.' He also used to say: 'I have been wronged often enough by Christians, but no Jew ever broke his word to me.'"

Owing to the illness of Alexander III., St Petersburg was very quiet in the winter of 1893-94, and with the exception of one or two splendid court functions, the Laws lived quietly in a small circle of friends, English, Russian, and some of the diplomatists, among whom the Count and Countess Wolkenstein, the well-known Austrian Anibassador and his wife, were the most intimate. In the daytime, Law, who was always very fond of outdoor exercise, delighted in showing his wife all the pastimes of a Russian winter. "We constantly visited the ice-hills," writes Lady Law, "and enjoyed crossing the magnificent Neva in a sledge. He skated and tried to teach me, but it was a pitiable fiasco.

‘This is the only sign of your being a Southerner,’ he would say, in benevolent but disconcerted astonishment. He had promised my old father, on my marriage, that he would let me return to him every winter for two or three months, and that time had now come. I left for Greece, and we met again three months later in Homburg, in summer.”

At Homburg, Law thoroughly enjoyed a period of comparative rest amid charming surroundings, and the effect of his stay proved so beneficial that the visit was repeated every summer, whenever his duties permitted it. But for him leisure was really impossible. The inevitable despatch-box, filled with the material for the special work upon which he happened to be engaged, used to accompany him even to Homburg, and his fellow-guests at the hotel grew accustomed to having their slumbers broken by the click of his typewriter.

He took a keen interest in his surroundings, and admired the Germans immensely, though he had plenty of criticism for their methods. Their enormous expenditure on means of communication, and the network of regulations which controlled them, filled him with dismay. “How will these people fare in time of war?” he would exclaim. “How will they mobilise, how will their trains run, how are they to keep their heads clear with all these rules?” Sometimes he would stop suddenly to look at a group of soldiers or artisans. “Look at them,” he would say, “with all their gymnastics, training, and ordeals of all kinds! We are stronger, healthier, and better men, . . . but they are beating us!” Plodding industry seldom appeals to an Irishman, but Law had learnt its value.

He himself was the most industrious of men, and he understood the secret of Germany's success. He would sometimes dwell on the various inventions and industries which had perished in England, but thrived in Germany. "Perseverance and plodding," he would say to his wife, "there is nothing like it—and I wish that your country would remember it too."

While he was at Homburg the Empress Frederick expressed a desire to make his acquaintance, and invited him to the Schloss Friedrichshof, which the Empress wished people to call her "house" and not her palace. Lady Law described the "house" as the essence of good taste; it was full of the most magnificent and beautiful works of art, all collected by the Empress herself on her various journeys. The Empress's Library was one of the most charming rooms in it; the only man allowed to smoke anywhere in the palace, except the smoking-room, was King Edward. The devotion of the Empress to Greece and the Greeks made her take the deepest interest in all connected with that country; she frequently corresponded with Law on various questions in which Greece was concerned, and whenever he and Mrs Law came to Homburg they were honoured with an invitation to visit her.

In the autumn Law presented himself at the Foreign Office, in accordance with the usual practice, and received instructions to proceed to Beyrout, with a view to preparing a Report upon the Railway Systems of Asia Minor. He and his wife spent the winter at Beyrout, where he was able to collect information about the state of affairs in the Lebanon. H.E. Naoum Pasha, late Ambassador in Paris, whom he

had known well in Constantinople, was Governor of the Lebanon at this time, and was fully occupied with the problems which are to be found in such a community—the perpetual jealousy between Christians and Mahommedans, and the continual disputes among the various Christian sects.

The appointment of a Christian Governor of the Lebanon, such as Naoum Pasha, was an experiment devised to secure a more satisfactory form of administration for the Christian subjects of the Porte. Law foresaw that the experiment was unlikely to succeed. The Christian Governor of the Lebanon held his appointment for five years only; he was dependent on the Porte for his subsequent career and his pension; in such circumstances the independence which was essential to the success of the experiment could hardly be expected. Yet Law's stay at Beyrout was full of interest. He was able to visit the magnificent old cities of Sidon, Tyre, and St John of Acre, and to learn something of the romantic but little-known history of the Druses.

Early in the spring it was decided to move farther afield. Law made a preliminary excursion of ten days by himself, during which he was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Dr Schumacher, the distinguished scholar and explorer, who was at the time acting as Resident Engineer on behalf of a group of German financiers who were then beginning to interest themselves in the railways of Asia Minor. Dr Schumacher is a native of Haifa, being a descendant of German colonists who, for religious reasons, left their fatherland and established themselves in this part of Syria. Dr Schumacher offered to accompany the Laws' party and to act as their guide, and as there was prob-

ably no European who had a better knowledge of this part of Asia Minor, they could not have undertaken the journey under better auspices. Law decided that his wife's maid should accompany them, and promptly proceeded to give her lessons in riding. Mrs Law interceded for her: "She is a Greek," she said, "she will lose her head; riding is not a female accomplishment amongst us." "On the contrary," Law replied, "it is because she is a Greek that she is sure to learn quickly. She must often have ridden on a donkey to her father's vineyard. I will explain to her that it is no more difficult than that." Every day for a fortnight she was lifted on to the horse's back, and thanks to the compliments of Law she came to believe herself a horsewoman, and accompanied the party during the whole of the tour at a discreet pace.

There were other unusual experiences in store for her mistress and herself. After a stormy passage in a small Austrian coasting steamer they anchored off Haifa. Here, in the words of Lady Law, "they were tossed about two mètres from the gangway into a boat, where my husband was waiting to receive me in his arms. The boat progressed with difficulty. A few yards from the shore wild men threw themselves into the sea to meet us. I had not been in good spirits before, and the sight of these men did not make me more so. 'With a little effort of imagination,' I whispered to my husband, 'I could believe them to be pirates.' It was explained to me that if I wished to set foot on terra firma I must place myself on the back of one of these individuals. I was not given a moment for deliberation; as the waves nearly covered me, I felt myself carried off by one of the 'pirates' and was safely brought to land." After

a stay of two or three days at Haifa, and a visit to Mount Carmel, the Laws started on their tour.

Dr Schumacher has had the kindness to transcribe from his Diary the notes he made during the trip, and has assented to their reproduction here. The notes taken from day to day are as follows:—

March 12, 1895. Left Haifa with Major and Mrs E. Fitzgerald Law and arrived at Nazareth same day, where we stopped at the small German hotel of Fr. Hebelschwerdt.

March 13. Rode together to Zerain (ancient Jezreel, residence of King Ahab of Israel), camped there. Major Law and self slept in one, Mrs Law and maid in the second tent. When in bed the Major and self had a whisky together, it being very cold, and he gave me a wonderful detailed account of his Indian career as officer, and his experience with British and native soldiers in India. We went to sleep as late as one o'clock and I dreamt of the wild East.

March 14. Rode *viâ* Besan (biblical Bethshean) to Wad-el-Bireh in the Jordan valley. Camp. I rode ahead with Mrs Law and explained in the Jordan valley to the learned lady the historical events of this ancient country. The Major continued in the night his most interesting accounts *re* India. He is a brilliant man.

March 15. Rode to and camped at Samrah on the Lake of Tiberias. Bathed in the lake, visited the ruins close to the village.

March 16. Continued our voyage. Climbed up the steep ascents of the Jaulan. Visited Kalat el Husn, ancient Gamala, and Fik *en route*. I pointed out the line which I had laid out for the Syria-Ottoman Railway Company and explained the prospects of same should it

traverse this rich region. Mrs Law suffered somewhat from the ride over the rough roads covered with basalt lava. At 3 P.M. we pitched camp at Chisfin, amidst a green spot near the spring of the village. Had a long talk with the villagers concerning the railway, in which Major Law was much interested.

March 17. Rode eastwards to Nahr er Rukkād. The Major rode over decaying and dangerous Roman bridge spanning this river, while Mrs Law and self led our horses through the floods beneath. The fording was as dangerous as the Major's ride, the river being covered with great basalt stones carried down from upper Jaulan. We now followed the old Roman road, and at noon we forded the second river Nahr 'Allān and camped at the large Haurān village of Tsil. Visited together the ruins of this ancient Christian and Roman place. A heavy east wind sprang up in the night. (In the morning of the ensuing day we visited a Roman temple.)

March 18. Followed the old Roman road which in parts is yet diagonally paved, passed a Roman milestone *in situ*. Rode *viâ* Tell-el-Ashary (Ashtaroth Karnaim) to El Muzērib, the end station of the French Damascus-Haurān Railway line. Crossed the river El Ehreir. Arrived at Dera'ah in the afternoon and pitched camp. (We lunched at noon at the Muzērib Railway Station with the stationmaster.) We were asked to dinner by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor Selim Effendi Milki (of Damascus), Kamakam of Dera'ah. Both the lady and the Major enjoyed the entertainment of this civil Christian official very much, with whom I have been acquainted for many years. Selim Effendi gave us many important hints *re* the products of Haurān, and Major

Law seemed convinced that a railway through this "grain store" of Syria would be a most paying enterprise. The richness of the Kada ez-Zēdi, the district of which Dera'ah is the head place, became by every step we made more evident.

March 19. Remained at Dera'ah. Visited two Roman temples, one of which was converted into a mosque. Old tower. Paid a visit to the ancient Arabic cemetery, copied an inscription dated 703 A.H. Saw entrance of underground city, Roman bath and aqueduct, guided by our civil governor.

March 20. Continued eastwards. Rode to village Umm-el-Meyādin and over Roman road to Ghasm, where we camped. The villagers gave us accounts of their sufferings and their dependence upon the Druzes of the Jebel Haurān. As we sat before our tents in the evening, and the village sheikhs in a circle before us, they pointed out how much they are in want of water sometimes, and could only get their water-tanks filled if the Druzes allowed their small watercourses to be directed towards their village. Last year they paid 200 mejidiehs to the Druzes. A year before the latter pillaged Ghasm. The Major enjoyed this evening palaver immensely.

March 21. Rode from Ghasm to Bosra. Visited the Kalaā, an ancient Roman amphitheatre, now a fortress, the temples, the column road, and stepped up to the top of the minaret, from where we had a splendid view over the Step el-Hamad and the Syro-Arabian desert, as well as over the rich grain-fields of Haurān. The Jebel ej-Jena of the Druze Mountains to our north-east is covered with snow. Copied several Roman inscriptions. After lunch we continued north to Sahwet el-Kameh, where we stayed half an hour, crossed the Wadi ez-Zēdi, and

camped at Msēfere. Large village, with shrine of Sheikh 'Ali.

March 22. Very heavy east wind on account of the "Equinox." Rode to el-Ghariye esh-Sharkiye, a village of 150 huts, well built, close to Wady ed-Dahab (gold stream). One and a half miles to the west we crossed el-Ghabiye, another very well-built village, and lunched at noon in the Menzūl or native inn of el-Ghazāle, the largest village we had come across so far. Continued by way of Obtāā to Sheikh Miskīn, a large village and railway station on the French line to Damascus. Here we stopped. The south-east wind had become too violent to continue, and rain began.

At the station we were very well received and entertained by the stationmaster, Mr Anton Abiad of Haifa, whom I knew well. He gave us his best rooms, and good native food, which we all enjoyed very much. The village of Sheikh Miskīn, close by the station, has 170 huts, all built of the black basalt. Mr Obiad gave the Major valuable records *re* the exports of Haurān and the amount of its crops, also of the invasion of the Druzes. Slept at the station.

March 23. Mrs E. F. Law and maid took the train at 1.30 from Sheikh Miskīn to Dāмасcus. The Major and self accompanied the ladies to Kteibe. Here we left the train and mounted our horses again. We rode to Kuneiyeh, then across to Unkhul, and slept at el-Hārra, a village at the east foot of the isolated, large, extinct volcano Tell el-Hārra. The village of 120 huts is the property of Mr Selim Freige of Beirut, who gave the Major a letter of introduction to his agent, Jusef Effendi Mansūr Hātim. The latter received us with much kindness in his small shop, and the Major showed him and

me how to quickly prepare sausages. We had a frugal dinner among spices of all kinds, sugar, rice-bags, wood and coal heaps, and lay squashed together during the night on a shaky wooden bench, but slept well. The village is built on the edge of the crater, and offers the finest view that I know over upper Jaulān and the whole country of Haurān. In winter the snowfall is very heavy on this elevated spot. We felt the cold in the night. I copied Greek and Cufic inscriptions. Numerous ruins in and around the town. The Shrine or Weli of 'Omar est-Shehīd looks down upon the village from the top of Tell el-Hārra.

March 24. At 10.7 A.M. the Major and self rode from Hārra over the plateau, covered with basalt blocks, and along a Roman road to es-Sunamein, and arrived there at 1 P.M. Railway station. Took train to Damascus, arrived at 4 P.M., and met Mrs Law at the Hotel d'Orient.

March 25. Worked out my note and estimates *re* the railway with Major Law, and then took leave of him and his lady, who are travelling back to Stambul.

March 26. Left in the early morning for diligence to Beirut, and sailed on the 30th March 1895 to Haifa.

This fortnight of nomadic life had been after Law's heart. He had a natural eye for country, and this had been trained by his habit of observation. Lady Law remembers that Dr Schumacher, who knew every stone and path of the country, was astonished at the perspicacity with which he realised the configuration of the country. "It was," she writes, "as if he divined by instinct the right road to follow, the pass to choose, the right slope to select. This natural gift, which made every landscape alive and speaking to him, caused one of our

best-known English generals to say that if Sir Edward had not left the army England would have had in him one of her best generals. I remember that when he was at Athens for the first time, after one or two walks alone, he came to me, delightedly saying: 'I have discovered the site of the ancient city. . . . It is there.' He explained to me the exact place—'It could not be anywhere else.' His surmise, which coincides with the opinion now prevalent among scholars, was not based on any knowledge of archæology, but simply on his natural eye for country."

He was always busy and always in the best of spirits when "on trek"—lending a vigorous hand to the work of striking camp, galloping on to overtake his friends, or laughing at the competition among the escort to retrieve his Terai hat—a valuable protection against the sun, but frequently lost by its vigorous wearer. He could appreciate all the charms of this life—the long ride in the fresh morning air, the midday halt, the glories of the sunset in the desert, and the long cool evenings. One evening the tents were pitched in a lonely spot by the shores of Lake Tiberias—there was no sign of human habitation, only a few girls, indescribably graceful, with pitchers on their heads, walking towards a fountain. The whole picture might have been taken from the New Testament, and as Law watched he said, pointing across the lake, "How easy to imagine Him coming across the water to us."

Beyond Tiberias they passed into a disturbed country, in which occurred an incident unrecorded by Dr Schumacher, but thus chronicled by Lady Law: "We were at the critical part of our tour, and the question of its continuance in the Haurān, which was nearly always in

revolt, depended on the decision of the Governor. A whole day was spent in pourparlers, but a luckless escapade of mine nearly ruined everything. For several days, in spite of our Druses and soldiers, our tents had been invaded by nomad Arabs, men and women, drawn by curiosity and the hope of pilfering. My tent being the finest particularly attracted them; they would come upon me in bed and interfere with my liberty. The first day, the handsomeness of my invaders, their boundless inquisitiveness, and their wonder amused me, but I soon tired of it. We did not know how to get rid of them. In the afternoon, when Dr Schumacher and my husband were pursuing the negotiations with the Governor, I posted two lines of Druses round my tent in the hope of being left alone to have my bath, which these inquisitive visitors had prevented in the morning. My tub was half full when the curtain at the entrance of my tent was silently raised and two women appeared. I ought doubtless to have recognised by their elegance and their jewels that they had nothing in common with my visitors of the morning. But my surprise at the breach of my orders which their appearance involved was so great that, with the willing help of my maid, I threw over them all the water destined for my luckless ablutions. They departed wet through and I breathed again. But when Edward and Dr Schumacher returned they seemed rather embarrassed. 'We are in danger,' they told me: 'the terrified Druses have just told us that it was on the Harem of the Kurdish Military Governor that your improvised douche was administered.' I was stupefied. Dr Schumacher had to return to the Civil Governor and beg him to transmit our most humble excuses to the Kurdish officer.

The power of curiosity saved us. Dr Schumacher reached the Governor's house before my victims had arrived home. The husband questioned them at once on their arrival, and they offered to forgive me if they might complete their abortive visit. I received them the next day with all the honours at my disposal; we spoke by signs; their eyes explored all the corners of my tent, and they were not satisfied until they had found and examined the tub of the day before."

Lady Law's reminiscences of their romantic journey may be quoted to the end.

"At dawn next day we were on horseback, reinforced by an escort of soldiers. We now crossed the Haurān, with its large level plains and fertile soil. Long caravans of camels and groups of Bedouins and Druses were the only moving objects on that vast expanse. Sometimes they were important sheikhs; whoever they were they knew our guide. We would stop for a few minutes and these Arabs would exchange courtesies with us, accompanying them with those ample and dignified gestures which were our delight.

"We were marching in the direction of Bosrah, on the confines of the great Syrian desert—which I was the first European woman to visit. The towns were full of Kurds with shaven heads and savage mien. The weather was forbidding to march—cold and rainy. We took refuge in a 'khan' to eat our midday meal. We had scarcely finished when we saw a procession coming towards us, a stretcher in the midst. On it was a man dying of no one knew what. They thought we might be able to understand his complaint. We examined him, but were no wiser than they. Our inability to help produced a bad impression. However, the moment

had come to continue our march. My husband from the beginning had wanted to push on farther in the direction of Jebel Haurān, but Dr Schumacher dissuaded him. I said nothing, but felt greatly relieved when we left this sombre region. Our next objective was El Mzerib. A more and more threatening *hamsin* (dust-storm) approached us. We could not see ten yards ahead. I was in the depths of despair. My husband, obliged to see after his own horse, could not attend to me. Two saises (grooms) came to my aid, and I made my way in tears. At the entrance to El Mzerib we saw our tents caught up in the wind; the Druses had not succeeded in pitching them. We also saw a house with European windows, and some railway lines. It was the first time since our departure from Beirut that signs of civilisation had consoled instead of offending me. The house was in fact the railway station of the line still in process of construction. Thanks to our guide, the stationmaster offered us hospitality. Next day, alone with my maid and a servant, I profited by a train which was going to Damascus and travelled in it. Edward continued the journey on horseback and arrived on the third day. It was the week of Bairam, and an enormous and fanatic crowd filled the streets. During our drives through the town, although we had a *kavass* beside the coachman, we were hustled several times. It was, moreover, the date of the departure for the pilgrimage to Mecca. We watched the imposing spectacle from the gates of the city. It was the last time, they assured us, that the caravan would leave Damascus on foot. The Lake of El Mzerib, which hitherto had taken several days' march to reach, and where the first religious ablutions are performed, would in the follow-

ing year be reached by the railway line, the sight of which had so consoled me a few days before.

“Damascus, which remains to this day the type of an Oriental city, was important from several points of view in my husband’s eyes. The bazaar built by Midhat Pasha during his forced sojourn in this city, the natural riches of the soil, the abundance of beneficent water, the industries, all this excited his enlightened interest. When we left, after several days, before losing sight of Damascus for ever, he could not help stopping for a moment to contemplate it. ‘I do not know what future awaits it,’ he said to me, ‘but the day will come when it will be really great.’ We were driving on our way to the magnificent ruins of Baalbek; the high peaks of the Anti-Lebanon, which we were going to cross, were still covered with snow. We were wonder-struck at the panorama which these heights presented. The plain, magnificent in its fertility, the noble outline of the famous mountains, the sky of an iris blue, which we had hitherto thought that only Greece could show, all united to make an effect which filled my husband with admiration. For him the beauties of nature alone could rival in interest the study of humanity. We could scarcely tear ourselves from the spectacle before us, but we were reminded that time was slipping away, and that it was necessary that we should reach our destination by nightfall. We passed the day in Baalbek dreaming.” Law used sometimes to tease his wife by pretending to admire Roman more than Greek architecture. “At Baalbek he triumphed: my admiration equalled his own. It was not the first sign of Roman times which had filled us with admiration. On our journey we had already seen more than one temple, but what particu-

larly struck my husband was the Roman road on which we had been travelling for some time, and which up to this day remains the best and most direct route. All along the road Law was under the spell of the legions which had tramped along this route, and whose names he could read inscribed on the columns of one of the temples. . . . After a day in Baalbek we drove back to Beyrout, where we arrived the same day. My wanderings in Syria had come to an end, and I went by steamer direct to Athens. My husband took a small coasting steamer, and carefully and patiently visited all the ports between Beyrout and Smyrna, all of them important in spite of their present smallness."

The conclusions which Law had formed during this journey were embodied in his General Report on the Railways of Asia Minor, which was published at the end of the year. This report is full of interesting observations upon the various railways in Asia Minor, all of which, with the exception of the short line between Jaffa and Jerusalem, he had visited: much which was then important regarding the prospects of the various railways need not now be recapitulated. His remarks upon the decline of British interests in that part of the world still deserve attentive consideration. Law observed that originally all the railways in Asia Minor were in English hands. But at this time the only English line was the Smyrna-Aidin. In consequence the general interests of British trade had suffered; for material was now supplied by other countries, and few Englishmen were employed in the management. This was a serious loss, for "every Englishman in a foreign land involuntarily acts as an agent for the introduction and manufacture of British goods."

Two main causes had contributed to the disappearance of British interest in railway enterprise in Turkey. In the past railways had been built by Englishmen in the belief that an immediate and paying traffic would be secured. Government assistance was seldom invited, and the promoters looked for their profits to the success of the line, and not to the gullibility of the investing public. But the more recent railway enterprises had been conceived on a different system. Liberal guarantees had been granted by the Government on condition that a specified route should be followed. Thus the development of traffic became a secondary consideration, and profits were obtained from the financial operations connected with the transfer of concessions to syndicates and the formation of companies. The economic interests of the country would probably have been best secured by the English plan, but under this the rapid railway extension desired and encouraged by the Government would have been impossible.

The second operating cause was the difference between the systems adopted by English and foreign banks. The new railways in Turkey had been financed by French and German banks, which were willing to lock up a considerable amount of capital and undertake a class of promoting business which was not regarded in England as legitimate banking. Though there was no reason to regret the existence of these more cautious and conservative methods, it could not be denied that for the purpose of such business as railway enterprise in Turkey far greater facilities could be found abroad than in England.

The only scheme for future railway construction which required the serious consideration of Englishmen was

the Euphrates Valley or Bagdad Railway scheme. Law saw no great future for a route from the Mediterranean to Bombay, starting at Haifa, by the Shatt-el-Arab, but if direct communication were established between Bussorah and Western Europe *via* Constantinople, the Euphrates Valley and Persian Gulf route would be the inevitable mail route to India.

For the present it was unlikely that any important extensions of the railways would be undertaken. With the exception of the Smyrna-Aidin, there was not a line in Asiatic Turkey in a satisfactory condition—from a financial point of view—that is, as regards net revenue derived from traffic. The others were either in difficulties or dependent upon Government guarantees. The annual sum required from the Treasury for this purpose was something in the region of £600,000, without reckoning subsidies for the railways in Europe. The peculiar system upon which the guarantees were paid gave the railway companies a direct interest in discouraging traffic, for in adjusting accounts the amount of the gross receipts was deducted from the sum to be paid by the Government, but no allowance was made for working expenses. Consequently the greater the traffic the more the companies would have to expend, and the less they would receive from the Government. The only compensating advantage, apart from strategical considerations, was to be found in the development of, and consequently the increased revenue obtained from, the districts opened up. But as the revenues from most of these districts were administered by the Council of the Public Debt, and earmarked for the payment of the guarantees, past results could offer little encouragement for further development.

In the autumn of 1895 Law returned to England for a few weeks, but the Foreign Office was not long in finding further employment for him. It was decided that he should visit Italy during the winter, in order to study financial and commercial matters there, and report upon the condition of industry, trade, and agriculture in the country.

He was again accompanied by Mrs Law, and spent five happy months of almost continuous travel, in the course of which he explored every corner of the country, and found time for flying visits to Sicily and Sardinia. He himself never wearied of this wandering life. "On the road" there still exists a sort of Freemasonry: he talked to nearly every one he met, made friends with most of them, and—as he sometimes said—learnt something from them all. At one time he would be in Rome, consulting members of the Cabinet, Senators, Deputies, and Chiefs of Departments; at another, wandering about Sardinia under the guidance of a peasant. A foreigner described him as "the bee which was collecting honey from all flowers." It was not by a study of official documents, but by verbal intercourse with all classes of society, and personal and independent observation, that he learnt the real spirit of the countries in which he travelled. Yet he often regretted that he could not read more: "I wish I had time for it," he would often say, "but I am only free when I am in the train."

His methods were necessarily somewhat different from those usually associated with our Diplomatic Service, for the character of Law's work was quite distinct from the ordinary duties of the members of that body. The service has rigid traditions, and is

sometimes alleged to be jealous of new-comers who have not qualified for it in the usual way—though some of its most distinguished members would come within this category. Thus, it sometimes happened that he encountered amongst English Diplomats a certain contempt for commercial matters. This to his practical mind appeared the height of folly. He himself had graduated in a hard school, and was totally unable to sympathise with such a frame of mind. On one occasion he was talking to an aristocratic but youthful member of one of the British Embassies, who was so ill-advised as to speak scornfully of the mercantile classes. "But, my dear Law," he said, "you are speaking of merchants; you don't seem to understand that we do not deal with such classes at Embassies." "Really," was Law's reply, "such a remark coming from you surprises me. Surely you yourself are the son of a merchant: does not your father sell his cattle, his sheep, and the produce of his land?" But at the same time no one had more faith than Law in the qualities of race and caste. In warfare, in the public service, or in the colonies, he declared that it was always the sons of good family who gave proof of the most courage, patience, and self-denial, and in confirmation of this opinion he used to tell of an incident that he had seen in the Sudan. A detachment of the Guards had repulsed a sudden attack by the Arabs, and the dead lay thick around the camp; as the force could not move, it was imperative to bury the dead immediately. Men and officers turned out beneath the burning sun to the trying task, which every hour became more repulsive. Overcome by the heat, stench, and fatigue, the men dropped out one by one; but the Guards'

officers stuck to the job, and finished it alone. "That was sheer grit," as Law used to observe, "for there is no honour and glory about burying putrefying corpses." Like many others, he attributed the existence of the British Empire to the younger sons, the cadets of the great families, who had to go far afield to earn their living, and brought with them the ideas, habits, and principles of their kind. And even when speaking of the unwitting "merchant" whom he had rebuked, he declared that "he bore me no ill-will, for he was a gentleman in spite of it all."

He formed the most optimistic views, subsequently justified, with regard to the future of Italy. The development of agriculture, the skilful husbandry, and the well-organised markets, the industry and modest requirements of the peasants, presented in his opinion all the elements for great and continuous success. It also provided a proof of his favourite contention, that the Southern races, with the right organisation and proper training, were just as good workers as the races of Northern Europe, if not better. In support of this he would point out that English merchant vessels are often partly manned by Greek and Italian sailors; and when he visited Homburg in later years he would call attention to the fact that all the navvies employed in the vicinity were Italians, with whom he used to make his wife stop and talk. He was especially pleased with the enterprise and energy which he found at Milan. "I am always jealous of Milan," he would say; "I would like it to belong to England."

Amongst the institutions in Italy which attracted his attention were the establishments founded on the co-operative or mutual credit principle, which have thriven

so amazingly in that country. In his report he cited numerous instances of prosperous and remarkable banks of that kind, and described the system of the Banca Popolare di Milano and the Cassa di Risparmio of Lombardy, in which banks good care is taken, and with complete success, to maintain these institutions in their original character, in favour of small capitalists, agricultural and other workpeople, and to prevent the control of the bank falling into the hands of large capitalists, who in their personal interest might seek to change its character. The most remarkable feature in the regulation of the Cassa di Risparmio of Lombardy noted by him, and which he called "Philanthropy in banking," is that, after providing for all expenses, the maintenance of the reserve fund, and interest on deposits, any balance of net profit is placed at the disposal of a special committee, which makes donations for objects of public utility and for philanthropic purposes.

The thoroughness with which he examined any subject he had in hand made him discover whilst in Italy the "Monti Frumentari," ancient co-operative institutions, which, he says, afforded remarkable evidence of the national inclination to co-operation for practical affairs at a period long prior to the development of modern theories on the subject, the object of these Monti Frumentari being to assist small landowners or peasant proprietors in the purchase of seed and cattle by a system of local credit. The most ancient institution of this kind brought to his notice was one founded in 1421 in the province of Lassari, in the island of Sardinia. It appears that in each parish of the province a field was reserved for the cultivation of grain under the superintendence of the priest, labour being contributed on

Sundays by the adult parishioners. The produce of this parochial field formed the capital of the institution, and in case of necessity any parishioner could obtain a loan of seed, repayable, with interest at 4 per cent in kind, at the next harvest. Surplus reserves of seed were sold from time to time, and the money realised was lent for the purchase of cattle, interest on these cash loans being fixed at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Under such regulations the funds of money of the Monti Frumentari became in time very considerable, and in excess of the requirements for which they were founded. This prosperity appears to have proved the cause of their ultimate collapse, since it is said that the control gradually passed into the hands of the richer classes, who had originally nothing to do with them, and that loans or large sums were granted without the caution or security provided by the jealous control of the parish priest and his poorer parishioners. Another cause of the dissipation of the funds of the Monti Frumentari was the passing of a law in 1852 authorising the employment of their resources for the construction of roads and other local objects of parish utility.

At the beginning of 1897, his Report upon the Economic and Financial Situation in Italy was published by the Foreign Office. He set out at length the results of his researches, and supported them by a series of tables and statistics. The general conclusions at which he arrived may be briefly stated. The home trade in Italy was steadily increasing in importance, for despite the growth in population there was no corresponding increase in the importation of agricultural products or manufactured articles. Her foreign trade had suffered through a

tariff war with France, but since the year 1891 the aggregate value of her exports had risen nearly 20 per cent. He dealt exhaustively with the condition of the various industries of the country, and with the Italian system of banking. The condition of British trade in Italy was not satisfactory. A careful examination of the different classes of imported goods showed a considerable growth of German trade at the expense of our own, notably in the more important classes of worked iron and steel, and chemicals. The causes were mainly those to which he had already called attention when reviewing our trade with eastern Europe. In the letter which accompanied his report he wrote: "I have ventured to deal at some length with the question of the establishment of through rates of carriage from British ports and other facilities for delivery to the inland centres of foreign industry, and I would desire to urge its great importance. Careful attention has been paid to this subject in other countries, and particularly in Germany and Austria, with the result that on the Continent through railway rates have been reduced to astonishingly low figures. This form of competition has yet to be met by England, and it appears to me that it would be in the interest of our shipowners to take up the question. In the present condition of affairs, low sea freights are in many cases insufficient to develop trade and increase cargoes.

"Facilities are required for the delivery inland of the goods which our ships carry only to the ports, and it would seem in many cases to be well within the power of shipowners to make such arrangements in this direction as would be equally profitable to themselves and to exporters of British manufactures. The interests

of the shipowner in this matter are identical with those of the manufacturer and the trader, and a practical recognition of this fact should prove advantageous to all parties concerned."

In the report itself, he stated that "the decline in the importation of British manufactures into Italy is an unfortunate fact, and the figures relating to this question merit special consideration." After giving the relative figures he adds: "These figures give a clear indication of the loss to British trade in manufactured articles during the last ten years. Part of the loss in total value of imports is due to the general fall in prices during the period, and part to the development of Italian industries having diminished the demand for foreign manufactures; but these causes of decrease in total values do not account for the increase of German trade at the expense of British, which is noticeable in many directions, and particularly in some of the more important classes of worked steel, iron, and chemicals.

"Other causes must be sought and certainly exist, though apparently they are of so complex a nature that there is some risk of error in attempting to define them on broad general lines. As the result of careful inquiries, I would venture to suggest that the following are among the more important factors favouring German competition: zeal in seeking orders, readiness to conform to the wishes of customers in question of quality, dimensions, appearance, and packing; offering quotations in Italian currency, the seller taking the risk of exchange; quoting for delivery at the place of consumption, all charges, including duty, paid; systematic inquiry concerning the commercial standing of all likely buyers, so that credits are given with fair security;

rapidity and certainty in date of delivery, and finally, lowness of quotations. As regards zeal in taking orders, I must refer to the well-worn subject of the ubiquity of the German commercial traveller, and the absence of any English rival (during the five months' travelling in Italy I have visited forty-five of the principal towns, and I never met an English commercial traveller, whilst representatives of German trade were to be met everywhere). But I wish to add a word of warning as to the imprudence of sending out travellers who are not specially qualified for transacting business in the countries they are visiting. The address necessary to please customers, even when accompanied by knowledge of language, is, in my opinion, insufficient without further qualifications. It is essential to understand the habits and ways of thought of foreign nations, and still more, to establish those intimate permanent relations in each important centre through which alone proper information as to credits can be obtained, and without which undesirable orders are booked, and payments fail, to the great discouragement of the British exporter."

At the end of 1896 it had been officially announced that the area assigned to Law as Financial and Commercial Secretary would in future include Austria-Hungary, Russia, the Balkan States, Italy, and Greece; also that his headquarters would no longer be at St Petersburg but at Vienna. Shortly afterwards he was called upon to undertake a mission to Bulgaria, in consequence of certain unfavourable rumours with regard to the financial situation there. The Bulgarian Government had taken a step which was certain to be regarded as confirming these adverse reports. They had addressed a circular to the Powers, requesting permission for an

immediate increase of all import duties from a basis of $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to 14 per cent *ad valorem*, pending the negotiation of a series of new commercial treaties. These would provide for a general increase of import duties, on the lines of a treaty which had been concluded recently with Austria for that purpose.

In December Law arrived at Sofia, where he was attached to the British Agency under Mr Elliott (now Sir Francis Elliott), to discuss terms for a new commercial convention between Great Britain and Bulgaria. He soon made the acquaintance of the leading public men, and was mixing freely with all classes of society. He formed a high opinion of the abilities of Prince Ferdinand and the Princess Amélie, who did everything to render his stay in the country a congenial one. Nor had the Bulgarians any reason to complain of a want of frankness on the part of the British delegate. Shortly after his arrival he was visited by a prominent member of the Government, who asked his opinion on Bulgarian finance. Law replied that he knew nothing about it so far, but that it appeared that their credit had been seriously weakened, and their present conduct was calculated to increase distrust. Payments of the Eastern Roumelia tribute were in arrear, a part of the funds raised by a loan for railway construction had been applied to other purposes, an untimely difference of opinion had arisen with the financiers controlling the Ottoman Railway, and the recent tariff circular was in effect an appeal to Europe *in forma pauperis* for ready money. When reporting the interview Law observed that his visitor "was much impressed by my remarks, and made little attempt to defend the conduct of the Government: it is sufficient proof of his interest in my

observations that he stayed with me an hour and twenty minutes." Such plain speaking was perhaps somewhat unusual in diplomacy, but Law was nothing if not direct. The Finance Minister was duly informed that the system upon which the annual budget statement was prepared was a bad one, and that the administration of the National Bank was in need of reform. But at the end of his visit, Law was able to report that, "notwithstanding the many difficulties which have arisen during our tedious negotiations for the commercial arrangement, I have been able to maintain throughout pleasant relations with the Finance Minister, and that latterly these relations have been even extremely cordial." Thus he was able to induce the Government to facilitate the import of agricultural machinery from England, and to introduce a system of through rates on the railways from the ports at which British goods were landed to the centres of consumption in Bulgaria. He also found time to deal with the dispute between the Government and the Oriental Railway Company, and to prepare a brief memorandum on the Bulgarian Army estimates for the Intelligence Department of the War Office.

He was much impressed by the industry, patience, and perseverance of the people. The Bulgarian peasant appears to have an almost unlimited capacity for work, and it is this characteristic which has made them—as has been sometimes observed—the least attractive, but at the same time the most successful of the Balkan races. Though the general character of the Bulgarians did not appeal to him, Law was always able to appreciate their solid virtues. The point about the youthful nation which he most regretted was the prevalence of

what may be termed "Oriental methods" in its political life. When speaking of the country he would raise his hand and count the victims of assassination — Stambouloff, Beltchef, Patkoff, and others—all murdered in their turn, many of them in the streets of Sofia. In his eyes this condemned the whole country.

Yet he could not fail to be impressed by the solid progress they had made. He mentioned one of the Ministers, "who, though quite a savage in manner and appearance, is really quite well read in both English and Russian literature, and talks well on them all. The three Ministers with whom I have most to do all speak English, and so do many of the higher officials. But almost without exception they labour under one great disadvantage. The world they know appears to them very large; they realise that they are important people in that world, and thus—though they are not a vain people—they have an extraordinary amount of unjustifiable self-confidence. They have no idea that the world they know is infinitesimally small, and that though in their tiny sphere they are superior to their fellows, there is no proof that they would ever have been heard of if they had had to compete with the intelligence and training of London, New York, or Paris. Such people are always difficult to deal with."

CHAPTER VI.

1896-1899.

WHILE Law was at Sofia his heart was wrung by anxieties more intimate and more profound than any which his official duties in the Principality aroused. At the end of 1896 disturbances began in Crete which evoked the passionate sympathy of the Greeks in Greece, and which led directly to the Greco-Turkish war, a chain of events which Law and his wife watched with anxiety and anguish. This is not the place to tell at length the tragic history of the "Great Island" (*Μεγαλόνησος*). Torn by the Arabs from the Byzantine Empire in the ninth century, retaken in the tenth, sold to the Venetians in the thirteenth, it passed in the seventeenth by conquest to the Turks; but its people never lost their Hellenic nationality. In spite of ruin and poverty caused by Venetian and Ottoman misrule, the Greeks of Crete rose time after time against their oppressors. Nine insurrections had been repressed since the establishment of the Greek kingdom, but in 1896 they revolted once again in the hope of bringing about their union with the Mother Country. This insurrection assumed such proportions that the Great Powers were obliged to send squadrons. Greece, whose

interests in the island were innumerable, also took action, and Prince George of Greece, in command of a small flotilla of torpedo-boats, was stationed off Crete, while a contingent of Greek troops, with General Vassos, A.D.C. to the King, at their head, was disembarked under the eyes of the foreign squadrons.

As was natural, an immense wave of popular sympathy passed over Greece, and drowned the voice of prudence. On arriving in Crete, General Vassos proclaimed the annexation of the island to Greece; soon after, with the insurgents on his side, he attacked the Turkish troops garrisoning the blockhouses in the island. These proceedings forced the Powers to take vigorous action. The commanders of the blockading squadrons issued an imperative summons for the cessation of fighting. The summons was disregarded, and the men-of-war fired on the insurgents and their capital on March 25, 1897, the Russian shells by a strange coincidence falling on the Greek churches. The indignation felt at Constantinople at the action of the Greek troops was not unreasonable; at the end of March the Turkish fleet in the Bosphorus was mobilised, and both sides began to mass troops on the frontier. On 5th April the Powers declared that the aggressor should in case of conflict be held responsible and derive no advantage from the result of hostilities. On the 9th, bands of Greek irregulars crossed the frontier, and after twelve hours' fighting at Kalambaka captured Bettino and Bozovo on the 10th. War had broken out and the Greeks were the aggressors.

From Sofia Law watched these rash and ill-timed proceedings with ever-deepening anxiety. His wife was at this time in Athens, and he was alone among a people

who did not share his enthusiasm for the Greek cause. His only pleasure was to go daily to the railway station; deeply moved and always ready to help, he would watch the departure of the Greeks who were volunteering for the war from the neighbouring States. "They are quite young fellows," he wrote to his wife, "often little better than children, most of them are peasants, who arrive at the station piled up in carts, real food for cannon." They often could not speak the language of that distant fatherland for which they were going to die. Law's letters to his wife at this period consist almost entirely of observations upon the political and military situation; they may therefore be quoted here without impropriety. Written from day to day as events unfolded themselves, they contain a sufficiently detailed commentary upon the incidents previous to and during the war, to render further explanation unnecessary. The letters from which quotations are published begin in January 1897.

January 1897. The news from Athens about Cretan affairs is very serious, but the important moment has not yet come. I am convinced that it will come about the beginning of May, when there will be a rising in Macedonia with the secret assistance of the Bulgarians, followed by their open assistance very shortly, if the first move meets with any success. When the Bulgarians seriously move I am sure the Greek will go for Salonica, which I believe they will occupy with the full consent of Bulgaria, and the tacit consent of Austria, who does not want to see any growth of Servia, and will effectually hold the Servians in check. I have never believed in the immediate probability of war before. I am convinced now that it must come within a maximum limit of two years, and probably earlier.

I only hope that England will be found sufficiently prepared, and I think she will be. It is a great opportunity for Greece, and she has deliberately thrown away half her chances beforehand over this question with the bondholders. It is very irritating, for Austria, Italy, and England have all good reasons to wish to see the development of Greek as opposed to Slav power in these countries.

February 1897. I confess I hardly know what to think of the present situation. It seems to me that much depends on how far Vassos can quickly establish a decent administration all over the island outside the four ports occupied by the Powers. If he can do this, the Powers certainly will not attempt to penetrate into the interior, and in course of time they will get tired of the awkward situation in which they find themselves with the joint occupation, and they will retire on condition that Greece acknowledges the suzerainty of the Sultan over Crete, and that the fiction of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire is thus maintained. Let the Greeks show quickly that they can establish a good Government in Crete. Lord Salisbury and 'The Times' both give as a reason for not accepting the intervention of Greece, that she is incapable of establishing and maintaining order in such a difficult country as Crete, having neither the money nor the other resources. I am sure that though this is given as *one* of the reasons, it is the *chief* one. Lord Salisbury is I know at heart strongly in favour of Greece, but he is bound to the European concert unless he can appeal to a serious *fait accompli*, and the mere despatch of a handful of troops and a proclamation of annexation is not sufficient. He has already declined to join in a blockade of the Piræus, as last year he declined to join

in a blockade of Crete, and thank God our naval preponderance in the Mediterranean is now admitted. It seems to me that the proclamation of annexation was a great mistake. Greece should simply have announced that she was going to take effective measures to restore order in Crete, acknowledging the *status quo* as far as regards the suzerainty of the Sultan. Annexation would have come later, and of itself. I think and hope that Vassos has a sufficient force for all that he requires to do at present. It was excellent that the Powers prevented any more Greek troops from landing, for that obliged them to prevent Turkey sending any more. I suspect Vassos would have found it difficult to supply more men than he already has with him.

Alas! the question does not end in Crete. There is great excitement here, and I hear also in Belgrade. The Bulgarian Macedonians are, I think, sure to commence operations in a few weeks.

Yesterday's public telegrams made me perfectly miserable, and I can only hope that they are not true. That the combined fleets, under the command of the Italian Admiral, should have fired gratuitously on the insurgents at Halepa would be so disgraceful that it seems impossible that it should have been true; and that the combined forces occupying Canea should have been attacked seems such an act of wanton madness, that this too seems incredible. I was just beginning to hope, that though, as Lord Salisbury says, "the moment for Greek action is singularly ill-chosen," yet it might prove "better late than never," and that with tact, prudence, and courage Greece might yet show the world that she had the capacities which she is accused of wanting.

If the fleets have really wantonly interfered with the insurgents, there will, I am convinced, be a great row throughout Europe, and unless they can show good reasons it will go very hard with the French and Italian Ministries, and even with Lord Salisbury, enormous as is his majority and contemptibly weak as is the Opposition; but if V—— has gratuitously attacked the combined European force at Canea, the great sympathy for Greece in England, France, and Italy will be cooled down, and the Governments will find themselves unopposed in a policy of reprisals against Greece, the idea of which makes me shudder. It was so clear, that though the three Western Powers considered themselves bound by their general undertaking to maintain the European concert on the basis of the territorial *status quo*, their presence in Cretan waters was a guarantee to Greece, that if not wantonly attacked or insulted their influence would be felt in restraining those who last year proposed to blockade Crete and now desired to blockade the Piræus. Is it possible that by a mad *coup de tête* V—— can have thrown away all the advantages of the situation? Patience and prudence were all that was required.

February 28, 1897. To-day's Cretan news have made me perfectly furious. Although, as I always told you, I felt that it was an important interest for England that Crete should belong to Greece, I had many reserves in my mind about the discretion of Greece in taking up the question at this particular moment, in what appeared to be an unnecessarily violent and injudicious manner, and I quite understood the Powers objecting to conduct which they chose to consider likely to lead to a general war (although personally I do not believe

that the action of Greece would in any way have entailed war) . . . but . . . but . . . but . . . I cannot express in words my rage at the miserable, mean conduct of the whole crowd, when I find that they protect a Turkish garrison in Canea which is allowed to burn the town and to fire on the insurgents, and they bombard the insurgent position when the latter return the Turkish fire!!!! It is incredible, and almost impossible to believe that England should be associated in a transaction showing such a detestable and un-English lack of the spirit of fair-play. Seventy shells fired from the men-of-war at an unfortunate handful of men who, according to their lights, are fighting for their liberty!!! . . . How will it all end? Now, as a Greek I should feel defiant; but it is not wise, and some issue must be found. If they would really, as a primary condition, guarantee to Greece the autonomy of Crete, on the Eastern Roumelia pattern, I think that Greece could withdraw with honour, having gained the material point of securing the well-being of the Christian population of Crete, and with such an arrangement the incorporation with Greece would be safe at an early date.

I must try and get away from this wretched question, which I know must be upsetting you terribly.

March 2, 1897. Yesterday I received your letter of the 23rd, full of your unhappy impressions concerning events in Crete. Alas! up to now, the daily telegrams which I wait for with such anxiety have failed to bring any light in the sky. The only glimmer of hope is that some Power may be refusing to give the Turks notice to quit Crete at the same time that the ultimatum is presented at Athens. If only there should be such a refusal, it might cause, and should cause the withdrawal of

England, France, and Italy from all participation in measures of coercion. Blowitz's last letter in 'The Times' has greatly disappointed me. He has been writing most favourably to Greece, and now, although he still expresses every sympathy, he says that there is no real strength in the movement in France in favour of Greece. He says it is confined to the Quartier Latin, a few enthusiasts, and is made use of by the opposition as a stick wherewith to beat the Government, but the parliamentary vote has already shown that it is not a powerful stick, and Hanotaux has nothing to fear, the more so as he will contrive to let it be understood that any change in his policy would be disagreeable to Russia. It is sickening, and the English Admiral goes blundering on, faithfully doing his duty. This has, thank God, begun to be noticed in England, and the Government gave the excuse that of course telegrams to the English press spoke most of the doings of the British ships, and that accounted for the impression that they were unduly active as compared with those of other nationalities. All humbug; the other brutes are simply making a tool of the Englishmen, and England will not send the Mediterranean Commander-in-Chief, because he would be the senior officer of the combined squadrons, and the others would be jealous. Again humbug; let them be jealous. We have been considering other people's susceptibilities all these years, and have had no return but abuse and mistrust, and it is high time to play our own hand, and to see that it is a fair and honest one. I am tired of being dragged through the dirt by rascals who laugh at us for submitting to the process. I feel it the more because for months I have been carefully watching with such

pleasure the tremendous additions to our fleets, and I did hope the day was near when might would strike with right, and put an end to an intolerable position. The Channel Fleet is now at Gibraltar, the Reserve Squadron is ready, and new ships of all classes are being rapidly launched, but what is the use of the finest weapon forged, in the hands of feeble old women?

March 7, 1897. I write this letter with a feeling of helplessness, for Heaven knows when it may reach you, if as I fear the Powers resolve to blockade the coast of Greece. What a terrible pass things have come to, through the wickedness of Russia and Germany, the insanity of Austria (Goluchowski) and the weakness of France and England. I have felt all along that Greece would not give in, unless at least the Turkish troops were withdrawn simultaneously with the Greek, and definite arrangements were settled beforehand regarding the form of autonomy to be enjoyed by Crete. This is the minimum that as a Greek I would accept without resort to force. What will happen next? It will take the Powers months to establish any sort of order in Crete, owing to the difficult nature of the country. The Turks will gradually assemble a really large force on the Thessalian frontier, but they cannot feed them, nor pay them, nor provide them with means of transport for any rapid advance. The nature of the country is difficult, the population hostile to the Turks, and therefore the Greeks (*if discipline has not been forgotten in the Greek army*) ought to be able to hold their own for a long time against very superior Turkish forces. This is not the opinion of the wiseacres in Berlin, or of Europe in general, but it is mine, and I hope I am right and the others wrong.

If I am right, and the Greek troops can hold the Turks at bay for two or three months, Greece will win the day, for unpaid and unfed Turkish soldiers will plunder and ravage and massacre, and very little of that game will bring the Macedonians, the Bulgarians, and the Servians into the field, and Servia and Bulgaria can between them put over 400,000 soldiers under arms, and men much better armed and provided than the Turks. I cannot say that I can hope that Greece will secure in the end the material gain to which she would be entitled, for when (perhaps after a general war) the whole thing is settled, as it must be, by a European Conference, I should fear that the memory that Greece has started all the trouble would prejudice her chances of obtaining a proper share of the spoils.

You see that though feeling pretty confident that the Powers are making a great mistake in thinking that they can close the question at will, I am, alas! not sanguine as to the final results for Greece, and the prospect of all that will have to be suffered before any solution is attained is truly terrible.

In the great debate in Parliament last week, Saunderson and Arnold-Forster, though both, as you know, Unionists, spoke very nicely for fair-play for Greece. I was very happy to see my two friends on the right side. John Morley, former Minister and my old tutor, also spoke very eloquently for Greece. . . . If I can get hold of the copy of 'The Times,' I will cut out the principal speeches and send them to you.

You may be sure that if it is in any way possible, by hook or by crook, I shall come; for above all now, in this moment of anxiety, I would wish to come to

you and your parents, and make you all feel that your people are my people. Poor pet, I am so distressed at thinking of what you must be all going through now, and yet I could not wish you absent at such time from your country and your parents. You have all my loving sympathy in both your family anxieties and your anxiety for your country. I will not waste time to-day discussing details of incidents in Crete, but I must repeat that though there may be doubts as to whether Greece was well advised to begin, and there may be graver doubts as to whether the enterprise was started in a judicious manner, the criminal conduct of the Powers since it was started wipes out from my mind every other consideration. "Fair-play is a jewel" is an old English adage which has, alas! been forgotten on this occasion.

March 8, 1897. Wherever the Turkish soldier may be he will entrench himself with much military skill, and he will defend himself with, perhaps, greater capacity than any other army in Europe. But holding positions will not avail him in a war with Greece, unless you are so ill-fated as to have commanders whose anxiety to distinguish themselves personally may lead them to imitate Skobeleff at Plevna, or Baratieri with Menelik. The Greeks must confine their operations to standing on the defensive, carefully selecting their positions, and at the same time endeavouring by petty offensive operations to continually harass the enemy and interrupt his communications.

You see, darling, how very anxious I am about this. If I were a free man, my services would be at the disposal of Greece to-day if they were accepted,

and I would like to raise a band of Englishmen to do some of the harassing work. I think foreigners of the right sort could be useful acting together, and it would not be difficult to raise two or three hundred English gentlemen of the right sort, good horsemen, enjoying roughing it, and prepared to pay all their own expenses. Foreign volunteers not speaking the language would, of course, be useless, and the Greek Government is quite right to refuse them.

I cannot say how I regret the fatal mistake made by V—— over the question of the relief of Candano. How on earth did an intelligent Greek fail to perceive that the moment the Admirals asked for and accepted his co-operation in regulating the internal affairs of the island, he had won the whole game? Had he given that co-operation freely, his position was established once for all, besides the praise he would have got throughout Europe for undertaking a humane action, which the Admirals would have stood confessed unable to perform without his assistance. It is heart-breaking to think that such an opportunity was missed. And why? Because V—— insisted on conditions for his co-operation, and particularly that the Mussulmans should be brought to Greece as prisoners of war. What on earth does Greece want with Mussulman prisoners? Are there not enough Christians to feed on charity? Surely the one object clear to common-sense is to force the Mohammedan population of Crete to quit the island and land on Turkish territory, from which they would never return. Now the result is that all these Mohammedans remain safe and sound in Crete, and when order is re-established in the island they will

tranquilly return to their old homes, and claim the property which would otherwise have passed freely into Christian hands.

April 6, 1897. The general outlook appears to me very dark as regards any early satisfactory solution for poor Greece, but I have never been more struck than now with the great power given to England by the fact of that "isolation" with which we are so often twitted by our foreign rivals, the said isolation being supported by our maritime preponderance. The black spots for England at this moment are not in Europe, but in the United States and the Transvaal.

However, enough, and more than enough, of politics, which I drop for to-day with the sentiment I express in the telegram I am sending you, "Prosperity to the country of my darling wife."

April 12, 1897. I am longing for, but dreading, this day's news. The idea that the Greeks should have made an unprovoked attack is maddening. They had everything to gain by waiting. Every day of postponement of the conflict was invaluable to Greece, giving time for organising, drilling, construction of frontier roads and field fortifications, while the strain on the Turks of supplying the large force they have collected was telling on Turkey. Besides, as a general principle of fighting, the Turk should not be attacked. He can resist attack, that is his speciality in war, as the Russians found out to their cost. Todleben, when he came to save the Russians before Plevna, knew better than to attack. He forced the Turks into the position of having to make the first move, and he crushed them, almost without sacrifice on his own side. I certainly did think a month ago that it might be wise

for Greece to declare war, and by means of her fleet to interrupt the Turkish mobilisation, without risking any serious affair on land. But that opportunity was allowed to pass. A month ago the Impuissances¹ would have been quite taken aback at the declaration of war, for which they were not prepared, and they would have found it very hard to agree on the steps to be taken. Now they have been given plenty of warning, and the moment they have come to an agreement amongst themselves as to their attitude towards the aggressor is the moment Greece chooses to become the aggressor. It was the same in Crete, where for nearly a whole year Greece remained quiet, and selected as the moment for action the moment when the Powers had agreed as to their course of action, and had already sent their fleets to the island. There is no use, I know, writing all this, only my heart is so sad on the whole question, and what I consider its wilful mismanagement, when the cause of Greece in itself has the sympathy of every right-minded and well-informed man in Europe. I can but hope that in some way or other all these errors may be repaired, and that prudence may yet save your poor country from disaster. I cannot write more to-day, for I cannot keep off this subject, and it is too much for me.

April 13, 1897. I wrote to you yesterday under the sad impression caused by what appears to me the great imprudence of the forward movement on the frontier, when it seems so clear to me that the Greek army has everything to gain by delaying till preparations are

¹ In this correspondence Law often speaks of the Great Powers as the "Hautes Impuissances."

complete, troops drilled, positions occupied, and roads repaired, whilst the Turks are necessarily steadily approaching the catastrophe which must come sooner or later with troops unpaid and miserably fed. The last telegrams appear, however, to show that the forward movement was not general, and I breathe again. I cannot say how anxious the whole business makes me, and though it is always possible that with prudence Greece may in the end be successful, the odds against her are desperately heavy.

April 18, 1897. At last it has come, and Greece is at open war with Turkey. I wish it could have been delayed, since I think that a little further delay for preparations would have been advantageous to Greece, but I can well understand that the situation of prolonged suspense had become almost intolerable to a southern people, and there must be a feeling of real relief now that the struggle has definitely commenced. I cannot say how anxious I feel. God grant that your countrymen may be able to hold their own, and that their courage in facing such terrible odds may be rewarded by substantial successes. I begin, since seeing a map yesterday and noting the first operations, to imagine that the Greek plan of campaign does not provide for the direct defence of Larissa or the Thessalian plain, but that the idea is to commence an immediate flank movement on the sea side, with a view of cutting the Turks' communications and threatening Macedonia. I wonder if my surmise is correct. It would be a very bold plan of campaign, but it strikes me that it is perhaps really the safest. Manos will in a few days, bar accidents, occupy Janina, and then the right flank of the Turks will also be threatened, and if Edhem Pacha finds his communications attacked on both flanks, he will be a rash man if

he continues his march southward, no matter how undefended the road in his front. It would be a real pleasure to see the Greek succeed in some such bold stroke, and the more so that everybody realises the desperate odds against them. What will become of the poor Princess at Larissa? I cannot think why she established her hospital there instead of at Volo.

April 25, 1897. I must write to add to my last night's telegram a renewed assurance of my heartfelt sympathy with you and yours in this terrible hour of trial for you and your country.

April 26, 1897. This morning's telegrams announce that the Greek army before the Meluna Pass has had to abandon its resistance to the entry of the Turks into the plains of Thessaly. Two days ago the astounding success of the Greeks made me hope for a moment that they might possibly even be able to take the offensive, and drive back the Turks, but it was my desires that made me foolishly sanguine, for it was a foregone conclusion that, with their immense superiority in numbers the Turks must succeed in breaking into the plain.

The direction of affairs in Athens does not satisfy me, though without full knowledge of all circumstances one should not be in a hurry to pronounce judgment. The Greek fleet appears to me to be behaving like an ass, shelling unimportant places, to make headings for the Athens newspapers, and without further practical result than the expenditure of valuable ammunition and coal. Why do they not put a couple of thousand men on board merchant ships to go with the fleet, and make continual landings all along that line of coast so as to really harass and worry the Turks, and oblige them to keep enormous forces under arms to protect all important points from St Jean d'Acre to Salonica? Why was

not Vassos recalled, and allowed to bring with him two or three thousand good Cretan fighters? Such a reinforcement to the army would have been of inestimable value. The fate of Crete depends on the result of the war as a whole. No operations in the island itself can have the slightest effect on that general result. Some at least of the Turkish islands should also have been seized, as a set-off against Turkish acquisitions on the continent, and also to receive the Greeks who are being turned out of Turkey, and who should have the chance of occupying the homes of the Turks in the islands, who should be obliged to leave them for the Turkish mainland. There is, I know, no use in writing all these things, but my mind is so full of the whole question.

Oh! that terrible bondholder business. How different everything would have been for Greece to-day but for that. Fancy the untold advantage to your army, if the Piræus-Larissa railway was now available to supply them!

April 29, 1897. Yesterday's morning telegrams were despairing. We were informed that there was a revolution in Athens, Volo taken, and a serious disaster in Epirus. I confess to having been somewhat sceptical, for we get hardly any news from Athens, or from Greek sources, nearly everything coming from Constantinople or Vienna, and Vienna displays consistent animosity. Thank heaven, a later telegram, from London, reduced the Athens' disorders to their proper dimensions and refuted the capture of Volo. This was a great relief to my mind, but still there is no doubt that for want of a Tricoupis or some man of equal determination in authority, the situation in Athens has been allowed to become dangerous. I do not think I could ever forgive the

Greek nation if, with the enemy on their soil, they began fighting one another, and, imitating the example of the cowardly Parisians, turned against their sovereign, because the war which he endeavoured to avoid had not been favourable to their cause at the outset. I felt very bitter at the idea of such a possibility, and the resulting disgrace to Greece in the eyes of the whole world, and you can imagine my joy when the news came that all responsible politicians were sinking private differences and giving one another the hand to join in resistance to the common enemy. I am indeed thankful that there were riots, since the result has been to show this sensible and dignified disposition in the breasts of the real representatives of the country. A coalition Ministry is undoubtedly the proper thing in such a crisis, and I hope they will make Theotoky Minister of the Interior. When there is serious business to do, that man can do it, and I am sure he will show energy and determination. I do hope somebody will take the proper line to deal with the ruffians who have been disturbing the public peace and showing themselves the active allies of the Turks.

The strain on Turkish resources will soon become too great for them, and the Sultan being well aware of this would be only too thankful if he could now get the Powers to intervene, and pose himself in the eyes of Europe as a generous foe, who was willing to be considerate to a defeated enemy. If I controlled the fortunes of Greece, he should have to seek the intervention of the Powers under a different guise, and with the acknowledgment that he was unable to continue the struggle, and that his superiority in armed force had been rendered nugatory by the superiority of Greek

patriotic determination. Do beg some one of influence to put forward the idea that even the occupation of Athens would not end the struggle, and that if beaten on the continent the Greeks would retire to the Peloponesus, moving a force of over 100,000 men. I know that neither Turkish finance, nor the internal organisation (disorganisation!) of the country, could long stand such a strain, and the Turks would have to appeal to the intervention of the Powers, when Greece would have the islands in possession as a material guarantee for an advantageous settlement. The Druses and the Bedouins would almost certainly rise if St Jean d'Acre were held for even ten days, and the numerous political prisoners there confined set at liberty.

May 4, 1897. The descriptions in 'The Times' and 'Standard' of the flight between Tyrnavo and Larissa are heart-breaking. There was no enemy pursuing, and the whole terrible business was simply due to a panic among young undisciplined troops. It would be almost impossible for any such scenes to occur with disciplined troops. Certainly in Thessaly the Greeks have not met with any serious check when standing up in front of the enemy, and it is most unjust to the army and to its officers to speak as if they had been defeated in battle. The Turks know better, and Edhem Pacha continues to display the most extraordinary caution, trusting to time and superiority of numbers to do his work.

If the worst comes to the worst, Greece can in my opinion still prolong the struggle indefinitely, by taking the great resolution (should all other means of resistance become impossible) of retiring to the Peloponesus, fortifying the Isthmus of Corinth, and patrolling the waters which divide the Peloponesus from the mainland.

Taking advantage of her maritime supremacy, Greece could under such conditions continue to harass the whole Turkish coast, occupy all the Turkish islands in succession, and finally drive the Sultan from his throne. That would be a resistance worthy of the nation which can boast a history like that of Greece. The mere declaration of such a determination would make the Sultan quake in his shoes, for he has the intelligence to understand what would be the result.

Greeks must die for Greece, as Irishmen must die for Ireland, and for England (too), and if the rascally traitorous *canaille* . . . are dealt with as they should be, the sons of Greece will not have given their lives in vain. Already they have secured an honourable name for the Greek army, and we may be justly proud of the heroes who have been fighting on the frontier against such terrible odds and under such trying disadvantages—I repeat, I am more than proud of the brave fellows fighting in Thessaly.

May 6, 1897. I am so unhappy and anxious about you. I have been dreading the effect on your health of the continual state of nervous anxiety in which you have been kept for so long. Dear love, if I could only have been with you to soothe you and calm you and take care of you. Recent events have indeed been enough to try the strongest nerves, but do make an effort, love, for all our sakes who love you, and for the sake of your country too. Every single calm, reasonable voice heard in Athens now is doing more for the safety and honour of Greece than a hundred soldiers can do in the field. The army has fought bravely, as even the most hostile European journals, including the Turkish Press, have been forced to admit, and although the enemy has had

the advantage there is nothing to sully the reputation of the army. The panic in the retreat to Larissa was exactly what might have been expected to happen with young undisciplined troops during a night retreat, unless that retreat was most carefully organised and superintended by a numerous and capable staff. Napoleon lost one of his battles by a similar panic, among older soldiers. Wellington, when first attempting to advance against the French in Spain, perceived that he would run such a risk with his young English soldiers and the crowd of undisciplined Spanish and Portuguese volunteers, and he deliberately abandoned his advance and retreated (abused for incapacity by the British public) to the famous lines of Torres Vedras, where he spent eight months in drilling and organising his forces with a heavy hand. When he at length advanced again, he never met with a check from Napoleon's first Marshals, till he won the final battle of Toulouse on French soil. One must have read and taken interest in military history to be able to appreciate the real significance of military incidents. Do not lose faith in the army of which you have so much reason to be proud, and let us hope that (most important) the volunteers may be kept from interfering with the regular army, and that the general plan of operations may be better conducted by a more capable staff. All soldiers knew that the Greek army was undertaking an almost hopeless struggle against an army infinitely superior in numbers and organisation. Success was impossible, unless the Turks committed unpardonable faults, or a heaven-born Greek general should be able to hold his own long enough to organise and discipline his army, when the Turks would have to give way,

owing to their inability to maintain a long struggle for want of resources. I am convinced that if the fight can be maintained for three months, the Turks will be so frightfully exhausted that even without losing a serious battle they would be obliged to seek the intervention of the Powers in their favour. Oh! how I long for such an issue to the struggle, and even now it is not impossible, if the Greek operations are conducted with prudence, and a resolute stand made in strong position in the mountains, where the Turkish cavalry becomes useless, and where numbers count for less, and personal energy and courage for more, than in the plains. I must admit that yesterday's news indicating that the Greeks were spreading in the plains along the long line from Velestino to Pharsala causes me serious misgivings, but I hope it is not correct. The line of defence is from Domokos eastwards, with Lamia as the base of supply. The sooner the Greek army occupies this line the better. It was perfectly right to hold Pharsala and Velestino for a time, but that line cannot be tenable when the Turkish forces are concentrated against it, and prudent generalship would not give the Turks the advantage of using with effect their enormous superiority in numbers when a first-class position for defence by inferior numbers lies close at hand.

A serious defeat now before Pharsala will be almost irreparable, but, thank heaven, I have confidence that in any case the Greek army will fight bravely, and that Greek soldiers will maintain the honour of Greece to the bitter end. I only pray for caution on the part of your commanders, and for the personal safety of our dear George.

Sad as may be the final material results of a war begun

without due preparation or adequate means, there is no need for despairing for Greece, and there is nothing to diminish legitimate pride in soldiers who have astonished Europe by their courageous demeanour in front of a superior enemy, and have clearly shown that, properly organised and led, they could face any army in the world.

May 9, 1897. You will already have learned that I was right in my anticipation that even if successful the Turks would very soon desire the intervention of the Powers. I am more than ever convinced that if only Greece will not lose courage, but will take the great resolution to defend her territory inch by inch, *with great prudence*, the army and Administration finally retiring even to the Peloponesus, if necessary, the exhaustion of Turkey will force her to accept the most honourable and reasonable terms of peace which Greece can desire. To defend the Peloponesus would require but a trifling force, whilst Greece commands the sea, whilst the protection of the long line of Turkish communications from Salonica, and the long line of Turkish coast, would compel the Turks to keep on foot an army of at least four hundred thousand men. The game, even now at the eleventh hour, is in the hands of Greece, if there is prudence and resolution, and all necessary preparations for retreat are made carefully and in good time. I should add that once the necessity of maintaining a large army in the field was at an end, the Greeks could easily spare a few thousand men to be transported, accompanied by the fleet, to the different Turkish islands, occupying them in succession and holding them as compensation for the territory occupied by the Turks on the Continent.

I dream of this and of the possibilities such a plan of campaign offers for the final triumph of Greece.

May 10, 1897. To-day they talk of peace. Heaven knows I regretted the commencement of war, but I am in despair at the idea of its being prematurely closed now, just at the moment that things ought to go really well. I am afraid that in Athens they have a very imperfect idea of the general situation. Here we are thoroughly informed, when we get the various newspapers, with the letters of the correspondents actually on the field, on both sides. Of course this information comes a few days late, but, though some of the correspondents are clearly incompetent, some are excellent, and by carefully studying the different accounts with the map one can understand the whole position thoroughly. 'The Standard's' account of the flight before Veloustino was splendid, and really very touching. I would have given anything to read it to you. Smolenski is a really capable man, and how wise to refuse the appointment of Chief of the Staff, where he knew that he would not be allowed to do what was right and proper, but would be forced to commit all kinds of folly in obedience to the unreasoning caprices of the Athens mob, of which, alas, all Ministers seem to be afraid. However, if, as I hope and believe, the last retreat was effected skilfully and in good order, reason ought at last to prevail, and one may hope that it may be recognised that defeat and retreat are very different things, and that it may be often wise policy to retreat, even after a victory.

May 12, 1897. You can of course understand, dearest, that I am quite in despair at the idea of Greece having made peace at this moment. The accounts from the Turkish army show that they are just beginning

seriously to feel the difficulties of transport over their long line of communications, and they cannot keep properly supplied with ammunition. These difficulties were bound to arise and increase, and with their increase, also, the expense of the campaign. The Sultan succeeded in getting a loan on the revenues of the lighthouses, but that is a flea-bite compared with the sums required to maintain the enormous forces he now has under arms. Although, unfortunately, the Greek fleet did nothing active, its simple existence compelled the Turks to spend hundreds of thousand pounds. Well, apparently from to-day's telegrams it is all over, and though my heart is heavy, and I feel very bitter on the subject, there is no use crying over spilt milk. Let us only remember the past as a lesson, and let us hope that it will prove a really useful one to Greece, and that the day may not be too long postponed when, profiting by it, she will be able to reassert her claims with more prudence and with substantial results. The people here are very sick; they hoped that Greece would pull some chestnuts out of the fire for them without any sacrifice on their part. They have got nothing but a severe snub, and now they are regretting that they did not move when the war broke out.

May 20, 1897. Of course, dear love, I am very thankful for the sake of your peace of mind that peace should be made, but I cannot help feeling that it is a grievous mistake for the future of Greece. The Turk had a hard try to completely crush the Greek army, by superiority of numbers, at Domokos, and he failed. It was his last chance. Since Larissa, his difficulties have been steadily increasing, and they must have continued to increase, and to the mind of a soldier it seems so cruel

to give up under such conditions. I always said that from the day that it was realised that the Turkish forces were too strong to permit of the invasion of Macedonia the Greek troops in Epirus were worse than wasted. A force at Arta, supported by ships in the gulf, to protect the western route southwards, was all that could be profitably employed, and when there were more troops on the spot than were necessary for this simple duty it was a criminal mistake not to employ the whole of them in reducing Nicopolis and Prevesa instead of sending them on disastrous picnics towards Janina. If Smolenski had had another 10,000 men, who could easily have been spared from Epirus, and if the decision to bring Vassos and his men away had been taken a fortnight earlier, Velestino would be still held by the Greeks, and the Turks would be singing a very different tune. Everything has been done at the wrong time. Vassos was not sent to Crete till the Powers had declared that they had taken special charge of the island, and had already got their ships there. It might have been wiser never to send him at all, but if he was to go he should have gone a fortnight earlier and with double the number of troops. It was very rash to make war on Turkey, but if war was to be made it should have been declared six weeks earlier, before the Turks had mobilised, and when a comparatively small Greek force, supported by the fleet, could have attacked the Turkish communications. And now, finally, peace has been made, just when the Turkish difficulties, on account of the length of their communications and their desperate straits for money, were becoming almost insuperable. All this makes me very sad. I have one consolation, however, that Greeks have conclusively proved to all

soldiers that, given reasonable leadership and other reasonable chance, they can fight with the best troops that may be brought against them. The panic in the necessary retreat to Larissa was nothing to be ashamed of. With young, unorganised, and undisciplined troops such incidents were to be expected, but the staff should have been able to check the disorder instead of allowing it to assume such alarming proportions. The abandonment of Larissa without the smallest stand, and with the position, valuable stores, was unpardonable, but was the fault of the staff, not of the troops. The retreat from Pharsala was a correct move, but again the staff was in fault for not having made sufficient provision for the retreat, and for losing, consequently, further important stores.

On the other hand, Smolenski's retreat from Velestino appears to have been a masterly manœuvre, reflecting the highest credit on him and his staff, and the retreat from Domokos appears also to have been quite well carried out. The materials evidently exist for forming a good army, and it need not be either numerous or expensive to give a good account of itself. I do hope that Athens will welcome and congratulate her soldiers when they come home, and that the Greek nation will accept the correct impression of what has passed, and in future be content to leave the guidance of military operations to capable soldiers. The army must no longer be allowed to amuse itself in Athens and Corfu. The King did his best, and tried to get a military camp formed. I am full of plans for making a really efficient little army, and hope to see George's activity and intelligence turned to good account in this direction.

General von der Goltz practically endorsed Law's

conclusions. The great German soldier naturally sympathised with the Turkish army, which he had created and whose best leaders were his own pupils, but in his historical study of the war (*Der Thessalische Krieg*) there are many passages which strikingly support the view which Law put forward in these letters. General von der Goltz recognises that from the first the Greeks had undertaken a hopeless task, but that the immediate cause of failure was not with the men but with their leaders. "The Greeks," he says (p. 108), "had from the beginning small prospect of success. Nevertheless, now that the veil has been lifted from the events of that time, we recognise that success might have been possible, but only under the leadership of an extremely daring and enterprising general. Once more the truth of the old saying is confirmed that in war opportunities always exist, only the Bonapartes are wanting to make use of them." To the courage of the Greek soldier Von der Goltz pays more than one generous tribute. "The obstinate resistance which the Greeks offered on the heights of Losphaki and on the Xeraghis until the 24th April—that is to say for six days—proves that they were by no means incapable of daring enterprises if they had been carried along by the will of a powerful leader" (p. 110). Referring later on to the same incident he says: "The resistance which the Greeks made, especially on their left wing, might well satisfy them. There they held out bravely, and under the most difficult circumstances, and the cheap sneers of the European Press upon the military incompetence of the modern Hellenes are not at all justified."

While still at Sofia Law received unofficial intimation that he would probably be appointed to the International Commission which was to sit at Constantinople to discuss

the war indemnity to be paid by Greece. He seized the opportunity of a few days' leave to join his wife at Athens, and on arrival he set to work to collect fresh information upon the existing state of affairs in the country. As a soldier, too, he wished to see something of the Greek forces, so as to understand better the whole situation by the state of the army; and he therefore accepted the invitation of General Tsamados, the Minister of War, to visit the troops encamped in the valley of Sperchios, near Lamia.

General Tsamados and his staff, with Major Law and his wife, were conveyed to the Bay of Agia (Sta.) Marina, the port for Lamia, by a small Turkish transport captured by the Greeks and turned into a yacht. Law, who was there in no official capacity, parted from the General, and was met on arrival by Captain (now Major) Hatzanestis, Mrs Law's brother, who was to accompany him on his visit to the army as far as Lamia. A young warrant officer whom Law had noticed on account of his looks, and to whom he had been further attracted on hearing that he had thrown up a lucrative post in England to go to the front, was attached to him, as he spoke English. On reaching Lamia Captain Hatzanestis and his comrades, in whose quarters they were to be lodged, apologised for the scanty meal which they had to offer him. "What," said Law, laughing, "a bad breakfast? But I have just seen on the way here stalls covered with vegetables and meat." "Perhaps so," they answered, "but it is a cook we lack." "Don't worry about that," replied Law with animation, "I will be cook; but first I must go to market." They thought he was joking, but he started off immediately, accompanied by the warrant officer, to

make his purchases, and soon returned with a basketful of provisions. He peeled the potatoes, washed the vegetables, and cooked the meat. The astonishment of his hosts reached a climax when the breakfast was served and proved excellent. The visit to the army lasted twenty-four hours; he returned to Athens, whence, after a few days' stay, he started for Constantinople.

The deliberations of the Commission had already begun when he arrived. The instructions which the members had received from their Governments were moderate in tone, designed to secure a reasonable settlement. But many conflicting interests were involved, so that much depended upon the personality of the delegates and upon the spirit in which they interpreted their instructions. The sittings with the addition of Law's presence began anew, and were stormy.

One of the most influential of the delegates had already elaborated a scheme which, he alleged, was based on Law's exhaustive Report upon the Finances of Greece, published four years previously. The scheme, which provided for the payment by Greece of an indemnity of one hundred and seventy-five million francs, did not commend itself to the author of the Report. Law was able to show that there were many other points to be considered which had not been taken into account. He himself drew up a second Report to rectify these omissions, in which the maximum indemnity was fixed at a hundred million francs. Other delegates put forward other views, and heated discussions ensued.

Law had a more intimate knowledge of the affairs of Greece than the majority of his colleagues; he was cool

and business-like, but tenacious of his own opinions and intrepid in defending them. The principle which he laid down was that Greece must not be called upon to pay more than she could. He was able to offer convincing evidence of the extent of her resources, and the eventual reduction of the Turkish claim from £T10,000,000 to £T4,000,000 was due to his influence.

Article II. of the Preliminaries of Peace had provided that an International Control should subsequently be established in Greece, "to secure the rapid payment of the War Indemnity in such a manner as not to prejudice the existing rights of the old creditors, the holders of bonds of the Public Debt of Greece,"¹ and in the autumn of 1897 an International Commission met at Athens to proceed to the formation and adequate organisation of this control. The six Great Powers were each represented by one delegate, with the exception of Germany, who reinforced her official representative by two special envoys—one a professor of International Law and the other an economist from the National Bank at Berlin.

Law was once more the representative of Great Britain, and set to work at once on his difficult and particularly delicate task.

Greece was at this time in a miserable condition. She had lost both prestige and credit; the Government was unable to meet its obligations; and public opinion in Europe, as voiced by the Press, was bitterly hostile; whilst Thessaly was still occupied by the Turks. At Athens the population was completely demoralised by

¹ V. 'Greece, No. 2, Correspondence relating to the Finances of Greece, 1898.'

the disastrous war, and indulged in vain outbreaks of discontent. The great question which the Commission had to face was the nature and limits of the control to which the country must submit. Most of the members of the Commission were inclined to make it stringent. Law took a diametrically opposite view. His knowledge of the country and the people convinced him that no good could result from the establishment of an extensive International Control. He was soon cheerfully engaged in a battle of statistics with his redoubtable opponents. He believed and maintained that the interests of the future Administration, in which the service of the old loans abroad was to be included, were identical with those of Greece, and that it would be a short-sighted policy to try to crush the country by too heavy a burden. Scheme after scheme was evolved; scheme after scheme was presented to the Commission. The Greek secretarial staff, which had been placed at the disposal of the Commission, knew no rest. Law himself laboured all day and late into the night; former budget estimates were translated and fresh ones prepared. With the aid of these statistics, which his friend and colleague Commendatore Luigi Bodio called "*queste tavole stupende*," he planned a whole financial system, having as foundation what Law termed an "economic" loan, which would have served to satisfy the previous deficits and give afresh a sound basis to the financial situation of the country. Law was unable to persuade his colleagues to accept his project in its entirety, but he was able to secure what he considered essential.

M. Etienne Streit, at that time Financial Minister at Athens, has paid a generous tribute to the value of

Law's work at this critical period. After the ordinary labours of the Commission had ended, the two would take part in long night vigils, discussing the best means of providing a satisfactory solution of the country's difficulties. "By means of this devotion and self-sacrifice Greece was freed not only from the Turkish occupation of Thessaly, but to a great extent from the weight of her financial embarrassments."

One of the very difficult questions which faced the organisers was the choice of the revenues to be assigned to the future Control. This difficulty, however, though great, was not the greatest, as in any case the revenues would have been amongst the steadiest. What constituted the most arduous portion of the task before the Commission was to reconcile the interests of her creditors with those of Greece herself; but these interests were fundamentally inseparable, for measures which would have crushed Greece would have been disastrous to her creditors. As already indicated, the revenues assigned to the Control were naturally chosen from amongst those "of which the progress was the most sensible and constant." The returns from them were estimated on the basis of their average yield up to that date, but in order that the bondholders should not be permanently injured by this estimate, a further difficulty had to be overcome, of which Law suggested the solution. In order to maintain equilibrium between the two parties, he proposed that the surplus of the assigned revenues should be divided between the bondholders on one hand and the State on the other, and a larger proportion allotted to the latter. By his plan 18 per cent was first to be deducted from the surplus on behalf of the Government for general expenses; then

40 per cent of the remainder was to go to the Government also, and 60 per cent to the Public Debt, of which half was to go to the bondholders for the increase of the interest, and half for the increase of the amortisation fund. To this wise combination is due the complete success with which the administration of the International Financial Commission has been carried on since 1898.

When the Law of Control was discussed in Parliament and in the Press there were, of course, agitators to complain that this last arrangement was really an interference with the executive administration of the country; but serious-minded people and true patriots did not hesitate from the very beginning to recognise that since certain prerogatives of the State were doomed to restriction, the emancipation from party politics of some branches at least of the public service could only be beneficial. This forecast was indeed correct, as has since been generally acknowledged. The branches of the public service, the staffs of which owe their permanency to the right of veto of the International Commission, managed by officials who have no guide but their duty, have constantly improved and become more productive, and at the same time have proved a model for those to whom the general improvement of the administration of the country has been entrusted.

Twelve years have elapsed — twelve years, during which this system has been put to the proof, and Greece has not only been able to bear the cost of the increased service of the Public Debt, but Greek stocks have steadily increased in price and value, the credit of the Greek State has been restored, and such

is her financial position abroad that lately she was able to raise a loan, considerable for her means, in France and England, without the direct guarantee of the International Financial Commission — indirectly, however, owing to the combination already described dealing with the surplus of the assigned revenues.¹

After several months of labour at Athens, certain members of the Organising Commission, of whom Law was one, proceeded to Paris, where the details of the loan to be guaranteed by England, France, and Russia were to be discussed and decided; and they also went on the same errand to London. In Paris Law insisted upon the various points for which he had always contended. His tact and good-humour, and freedom from all insular prejudice, proved as effective as his arguments with the cosmopolitan body which constituted the Commission. Yet he could be uncompromising enough when the occasion required, and there is one of his speeches at Paris which is quite worthy of the traditional Briton. M. Hanotaux, at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs, was presiding at these meetings, when a controversy arose with regard to the correct way of wording a particular clause, and Law proved obdurate. The point was most important, and at length M. Hanotaux, having exhausted all his arguments, exclaimed in despair: “*Mais enfin, Monsieur, je suis académicien!*” “Very possibly, M. le Ministre,” was the reply, “but still I cannot sign;” and the Academician was forced to give way.

¹ It is through the proceeds of the surplus of the assigned revenues that both the Greek State and the International Financial Commission have been able to raise or guarantee any fresh loan.

This passage was written at the end of 1910; since the Revision of the Constitution in the spring of 1911 the position has been somewhat altered.

Of Law's part in these transactions one of his colleagues in Paris, His Excellency Mons. A. Raffalovitch, has left a description which is of special interest as a record of a useful piece of work which attracted little public attention, and as illustrating the impression which Law left upon the men with whom he was thrown into intimate contact:—

“ La personnalité de M. Law a laissé son empreinte dans les fonctions qu'il a remplies, tout comme dans la mémoire de ceux qui l'ont connu d'une façon assez intime pour l'apprécier à sa juste valeur.

“ Pour des continentaux, le premier contact était celui de la réserve. Law ne se livrait qu'à bon escient, mais dès qu'il avait jugé le caractère de son compagnon, de son partner dans un voyage, dans une négociation, dès qu'il était en confiance, il donnait l'impression de la sécurité la plus complète.

“ Lorsque je fus en relation pour la première fois avec Law, ce fut d'une façon tout à fait inopinée. Je le connaissais de réputation de longue date. Attaché commercial en Russie, il avait écrit des rapports très remarqués; honoré de l'amitié de Wichnegradsky, Ministre des Finances, il avait été mis au courant des projets du Ministre, qui vit le rétablissement des finances russes après la guerre de 1877 contre les Turcs. De St Pétersbourg, Law avait été envoyé à Vienne, à Athènes. Je m'étais trouvé en désaccord avec lui au sujet des finances helléniques, que je jugeai avec plus de pessimisme qu'il ne l'avait fait.

“ L'ordre de me mettre en relation avec Law et Dubois de l'Estang pour préparer la conclusion d'un emprunt que les Puissances Garantes de la Grèce

voulaient voir contracter pour payer l'indemnité de guerre aux Turcs et couvrir le déficit, me parvint en Allemagne. Je regagnai Paris aussitôt et pendant de longs mois, tantôt à Paris, tantôt à Londres, nous vécumes nos journées ensemble, préoccupé de mener à bonne fin la mission qui nous avait été confiée. Celle-ci n'était pas facile. Il fallait adapter aux circonstances spéciales,—un emprunt garanti par trois Puissances, émis au nom d'un Etat qui n'avait pu tenir ses engagements et qui était en tutelle internationale—le mécanisme d'une opération de crédit à faire sur les trois places de Londres, de Paris et de St Pétersbourg. Plus accoutumé à la technique de ce genre de négociations que mes collègues anglais et français, j'apportai un texte précis, celui d'un contrat intervenu entre le Gouvernement russe et ses banquiers, ainsi que les arrangements du 3 per cent égyptien garanti par les six Puissances.

“Sur ces données, Law, Dubois de l'Estang et moi, nous nous mimes en travail et nous pûmes établir les éléments indispensables à la conclusion.

“La part de Law a été des plus considérables dans cette besogne commune. Il y apporta des qualités précieuses d'intelligence. Dans une carrière qui avait compté des années de service militaire, de pratique des affaires privées, de diplomatie commerciale, Law avait acquis une compétence presque universelle. Observateur perspicace, il avait emmagasiné une foule d'informations utiles, dont il savait faire l'emploi le plus méthodique.

“Très britannique dans ses idées, très patriote, très convaincu de la grandeur nationale, il connaissait assez les pays étrangers pour savoir que l'homme d'Etat doit tenir compte des réalités de l'heure présente.

“L'emprunt grec a été relativement une petite chose

—il s'est agi de 150 et 175 millions de francs. L'opération n'a passionné personne que les trois négociateurs, mais elle montra tout ce que Law avait en lui, la souplesse de son intelligence, l'étendue de ses connaissances, la fermeté de son caractère.

“ Une amitié sincère que la sort seule a rompue a existé entre Law et moi. J'ai suivi avec l'intérêt le plus vif ce qu'il a fait aux Indes comme Ministre des Finances. Nous avons souvent discuté les questions qu'il avait à résoudre pour le plus grand bien de l'admirable possession anglaise. Il a eu des vues plus originales, plus près de la vérité financière, que la plupart de ceux qui ont été à la tête de ce département.

“ Law n'a pas donné la mesure complète de ce qu'il pouvait accomplir. Il a toujours été supérieur aux fonctions qui lui ont été confiées. La perte d'un homme de cette trempe est difficile à réparer.

“ A. RAFFALOVITCH.”

When the representatives of the Commission reached London, Law was anxious that his colleagues should receive the same hospitality and consideration as had been offered them in France, but he encountered unexpected difficulties in the temperament of Lord Salisbury, then Prime Minister and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The latter, as was well known in official circles, had a strong aversion to ceremonial interviews, and he wished that the duty of entertaining the foreign members of the Commission should be discharged by Law. The Foreign Office was even so munificent as to offer £100 for their entertainment, which, however, thanks to the vigilance of the Inland Revenue Commissioners, was reduced to £94 when it reached Law; the munificence of the

Foreign Office being treated as income and taxed accordingly, to Law's great amusement! However, Law respectfully informed his great Chief that his dinner-parties would not suffice for the proper treatment of his colleagues. "What do you want more?" Lord Salisbury is reported to have said. He was indeed asking for a great deal—the reception by Lord Salisbury of the two foreigners. Lord Salisbury pleaded want of time; Law would not take the £100; and Lord Salisbury ended by giving the audience, and nobody could have been more gracious and charming.

In the beginning of 1898, when the question of the loan had been decided, the law establishing the Control was passed, and came into operation in May; but Law, who had saved Greece from an overwhelming burden, desired also to safeguard her moral dignity. The word "control" savoured to him of servitude, and was eliminated, and "International Financial Commission" substituted for it. It was necessary to elect the first President for one year: his successors—according to the regulations—assumed office in the alphabetical order of the names of the countries which they represented; and it is no slight tribute to Law's personality that he was unanimously elected first occupant of the post. This position he accepted with pride and happiness: he was the only President who refused the emoluments which Greece gives to the Delegates.

At Athens he speedily showed that his talent for administration was equal to his skill in diplomacy, and the way he organised the Commission is regarded as a model. The Service was divided into four principal Departments—the General Secretariat, Comptabilité, "Section du Timbre," and the Inspection Department.

All records were kept in the strictest order. Law had the invaluable gift of getting the best out of his subordinates, and always attributed the success of the administration to the excellent work of the permanent staff provided by the Government, and notably of M. C. Papaloukas and M. G. Papadopoulos, the chiefs of the two principal departments.

Perhaps the most awkward duties incumbent upon the Commission were those which were entrusted to the Department of Inspectors. The Inspectors, as well as the Delegates themselves and the Secretary-General, were to deal with the Greek Government, and the Greek Inspectors, for the time being the representatives of a foreign administration, had to patrol the country and supervise the different branches of the Public Service managed by the Commission. They had to avoid all action which might offend the most sensitive nation in Europe, and at the same time to exercise all the rights and carry out the duties which the service of the International Commission implied. Law realised the difficulty, and always endeavoured to avoid wounding Greek susceptibilities. The regulations which he drew up for the Inspectors stated that it was their duty "to overlook the operations of the dépôts and establishments of the Departments of Excise, Stamps, Tobacco, Salt—and all questions connected with those sources of revenue controlled by the Commission. . . . The Inspectors must always remember that nothing could be more hurtful than even the semblance of too much zeal. They must listen to everything, note everything, and observe everything, while employing the strictest possible tact. They are absolutely forbidden to interfere directly with the administration of the Government Departments. They

must limit their actions to detailed and confidential reports, addressed to the Commission, on the management and collection of taxes, and on the character and behaviour of the Government employés and those of the Society of the Régie." It is mainly due to these precautions that the work of this Department has been successfully carried out.

Throughout his term of office, the ideal at which he aimed was the establishment of the International Financial Commission as a real institution of the country—a friend and counsellor, upon whom she could rely.¹ He succeeded in convincing his colleagues that the wisest course was to employ Greeks only in the service of the Commission. This he tried to do during the discussions of the Organising Commission, and to insert a clause on the subject in the Law of Control; but he did not then achieve his object, and the idea was that the staff of the Commission should be composed of officials of different nationalities. But Law, realising the insurmountable difficulties, and the daily and hourly friction which would have arisen, especially in the Inspection Department, did not cease urging the advisability of restricting the nominees to Greeks. He ended by wearing down opposition, and at the very beginning of his Presidency a Minute was passed on the subject, and the decision arrived at formally announced to the Greek Government.

Law was never given to writing much, or to much belief in papers. He was more than once known, when looking at the records of the Commission—the order

¹ Animated by the same spirit, the International Commission comes frequently to the assistance of the Government by advancing the surplus of the increased values whenever such necessity arises.

and the arrangement of which so much pleased and interested him—to express the hope that the same would be done away with the moment they were not of actual use. He made a habit of going round the offices and advising the staff on all subjects and questions. On these occasions he never failed to notice the amount of work that was being done, and it occasionally happened that some unexpected piece of extra work was soon after entrusted to one of the officials. One day as he was passing the office, he saw one of the younger members of the staff leisurely standing and looking out of the window. He smiled at him, but the Head of the Department was informed later in the day that “work, constant work” was the only means of rendering work a necessity to people, and that if urgent work, or any work at all was not on hand, some must be invented at once, to keep the staff up to the mark.

In addition to his official duties, Law interested himself in all questions which affected the welfare of the country. For instance, he resisted, in a letter to the Press, what he regarded as a mischievous proposal to establish a Government monopoly of tobacco, with a view to increasing the revenue. He pointed out that in a country where the cultivation of tobacco is undertaken on a large scale, and where surveillance is extremely difficult, the introduction of a monopoly of tobacco would lead to continual abuses and disputes among employés, merchants, and cultivators.

“I doubt greatly,” he said, “taking the circumstances into consideration, whether the result would be a serious increase of revenue. The tobacco monopoly under the system of the Régie is suitable for countries

which either do not produce tobacco at all or only in small quantities. But experience proves that for countries like Greece, where there is extensive cultivation and a difficulty of surveillance, the system of the Régie presents great drawbacks. Greece has a right to be proud of the special system which she has invented, a system which gives a certainty of increase of revenue without hurting any one. Why change what is good? Finally, allow me to say that if it is necessary to increase the annual revenue it can be brought about without new charges on the people. An addition of from one to two drachmas on the rights of 'Hachage' could give a considerable sum per annum without diminishing the consumption of tobacco."

His influence and his arguments, which produced a great impression at the time, had the desired effect. The Government not only abandoned its project, but accepted his proposals to increase the duty on "Hachage," and the tax has since then continued to operate and to give the anticipated increase of revenue.

The question of Corinthian currants also interested him greatly; in response to a flattering invitation he attended a conference held at Patras to discuss the subject, and he delivered a short address, which made so deep an impression that the editor of the leading paper reproduced it on the occasion of his death ten years later. In that short address Law had the courage to speak plainly upon the necessity of scrupulous probity in the fulfilling of contracts. "Without commercial morality and credit," he said, "no work is successful. It is commercial morality which creates confidence in contracts. And it is for this reason that experience has

shown the necessity of establishing tribunals in order to safeguard contracts. Insist, therefore, above all on the establishment of sound courts for the support of business transactions. But in order to get satisfactory tribunals you must have well-paid judges, and men appointed for life. I must apologise for interfering in this subject, but the question of such tribunals is the necessary basis for everything."

An Athenian paper (the 'Scrip') on the same occasion gratefully recalled the work that Law had done ten years before in connection with the currant trade.

"We who met him at the Second Currant Conference at Patras in 1898, consider it our duty to remember and to remind others of his valuable services at the time, and his sincere devotion to the sufferings of the unfortunate currant-producers. The currant crisis was raging, and the retention of the produce was not yet established. He was invited to the Conference, and willingly he accepted the invitation, having been named Honorary President. The popular reception given him will never be forgotten. But Sir Edward Law did not come with empty hands. His report, which was inserted in the minutes of the Conference, will remain a proof of his perspicacity and the superiority of his understanding and the soundness of his economic principles, although he had hardly been in Greece two years.

"The Currant Bank, he said, should be popular, and the contribution of the producers should come out of their own produce. The only means of arriving at this result is the establishment of the retention for a certain period of years. Another source is the money due by

the State to the Retention Fund, and this should be returned.

“And his words became flesh, and a few months later the Currant Bank, the only popular institution in Greece, was founded on a similar basis.

“In honour of the memory of Sir Edward Law, we must not consider what the Bank has become, but what it could have been, and the Greek nation in blessing his name to-day, ought to blame itself for not being able to protect itself.”—(Extract from an article in the ‘Scrip,’ of Athens, dated the 8/21 November 1908.)

Law travelled through Greece as much as time permitted, and gave practical advice and help to individual peasants as well as to bankers and statesmen. At Naxos, which he had occasion to visit more than once, he planted mulberry-trees, and also distributed them to the peasants with the idea of interesting them in the cultivation of silk. He was very much touched when, in recognition of his kindness, he was offered the freedom of one of the principal towns of the island. Though an ardent Philhellene he was not blind to Greek faults. The prevalence of smuggling in Greece was in his eyes a national disgrace. He realised that on account of the configuration of the country it would be both expensive and difficult to maintain a larger Custom House organisation; he therefore advocated the employment of torpedo-boats, and even small cruisers, on those parts of the coast where smuggling was carried on. He waged war on the almost universal practice of evading payment of the various stamp duties, which had a serious effect upon the receipts from this source of revenue. Himself the most punctilious observer of regulations of this

nature, he regarded the practice of evading these obligations as foolish and even criminal. His favourite maxim declared that people are governed as they deserve to be governed, and a deliberate evasion of the laws of the country could not fail to have the worst results.

The large number of troops garrisoned in Athens, instead of all along the frontier, disturbed his practical and military mind. The way to the Commission in Athens leads also to the barracks, and Sir Edward therefore used regularly to meet the officers going to and fro; almost as regularly he used to say to his wife, when she happened to accompany him: "Very smart, all these officers; but I wish that two-thirds of them were at Larissa instead of in Athens."

He urged the necessity of improved communications with Central Europe, and did not cease to deplore that the importance of the question was not realised. He constantly visited the technical schools for the poorer classes, which he greatly admired, and showed his sympathy for practical science by founding a Statistical Society.

It is curious to note the fascination which the country and its people exercised upon his practical mind. Many Englishmen have been conscious of the spell, but they have usually been men whose sympathies had been first awakened by their ardent admiration for ancient Hellas. Law had no such antiquarian prejudices! He lived for four months at the foot of the Acropolis, and only went up it when he heard of the curves of the Parthenon; but it was the problem in mechanics, and not the art of Phidias, which drew him there. What he did care for intensely was the people of Greece at the present day. In Athens one of his favourite haunts was the

Zappeion Park on a Sunday afternoon among the holiday-makers. Lady Law recalls that once on a public holiday as they were going out he said to her: "Come along; I'll take you to a place and show you a view of Athens you never saw before, I am afraid." On drawing near to the Zappeion Park I exclaimed: "Well, Edward, of all places to bring me to on a holiday!" "Come along," he repeated. And indeed soon after, when he had brought me to a particular spot in the grounds, I was lost in admiration of the view that presented itself all at once to my eyes,—the sea through the columns of the temple of Jupiter, the Acropolis to my right, the Stadium to my left, and turning round, Lycabettos behind. "That is *your* Athens," he exclaimed, "isn't it?" Then, with a sweeping movement, he added: "And all this, with this crowd—this living crowd—around us is my Athens."

On their side the Greek people were quick to recognise the debt of gratitude they owed him. In Greece more perhaps than in any other country his chivalrous nature was sure of appreciation. This people, so critical, so fastidious, and often inconstant, learned to love and trust the Irishman, who hid beneath a gruff manner a heart as warm and as impetuous as their own. From his first visit to Greece he had the good fortune to attract the King's sympathy and regard, which he repaid by a sincere and lasting devotion, and the marked distinction with which the Queen and the whole Royal family treated him was a source of real gratification. But the confidence which Law inspired was not confined to the educated classes. Lady Law relates the following incident: "At the end of the war the fact that Edward had been appointed British Dele-

gate for the Indemnity Commission greatly relieved the public mind in Greece. Before going to meet him in Constantinople I made an excursion to Epidaurus, to see the magnificent ancient theatre, and on my return from Epidaurus to Nauplia, where I had to take the train again, and where the saloon carriage which had been put at my disposal was awaiting my arrival, I found when I reached the station a group of well-to-do peasants waiting outside the carriage, who, at the sight of me and the two friends with whom I was travelling, came forward. We asked them what they wanted. 'Why,' they said, 'which is his wife? We came to see her.' 'Whose wife?' asked my friend. 'Law's wife, our friend's, who is now in Constantinople,' was the answer. I confess I was deeply touched. Well as I knew how far and how deeply the Greek nation—thanks to its wonderful sensitiveness—had understood and appreciated Edward, I did not know that even to good simple peasants in the provinces his name could have been thus known, and have meant so much."

When he was about to leave Athens for Constantinople the Staff of the International Financial Commission united their small savings to present him with a valuable, handsomely framed picture, with an expressive inscription. Law always valued this present and the recollection of the moving scene which accompanied the presentation more highly than the costly tokens of public and royal esteem which he received elsewhere. The one occasion on which he became the mark of hostile criticism eventually served to endear him to the people of Greece. He was once made the subject of attack in an Athenian newspaper for insisting

that a personal favour should be granted him by one of the Government Departments. It subsequently transpired that he had remembered the young sailor who accompanied him to Lamia, and who had thrown up his appointment in England to serve in the navy, and he pressed for the payment of his travelling expenses to enable him to return.

Greece has again been able to show that in her case national gratitude is not—as it was once described by the late Lord Salisbury—"a rare bird, whose normal habitat is the after-dinner speech." The Greeks have always valued the goodwill of Great Britain, and henceforth Law occupied a unique position in their eyes. Greece has never lacked sympathisers in England, but their sympathy has not always proved a very satisfactory stand-by in adversity. When the fortunes of Greece were at their lowest ebb, Law had come to the rescue. He combined Philhellenic enthusiasm with true statesmanship and business ability. He was consistent and practical; when necessary he could be coldly critical. But it was always clear that he was working for a cause which lay very near his heart. The task of the International Financial Commission at its beginning had been a hard one, and its first President left behind him a record of work well done, which was to have a long memory in the heart of a grateful nation.

The value of his services was also recognised by the British Government, and shortly after he was elected President of the International Financial Commission he was created a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George; whilst the rank of Minister in

the Diplomatic Service was conferred on him at the same time on the personal initiative of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. From France and Russia he received valuable and artistic medals to replace the decorations which, as a Member of the British Diplomatic Body, he could not accept.

CHAPTER VII.

1899.

CONSTANTINOPLE—THE OTTOMAN PUBLIC DEBT.

SOME months before Sir Edward Law's period of office as President of the International Financial Commission had expired, he was invited by the Council of the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders to act as Representative of the British, Belgian, and Dutch holders of Turkish Bonds on the Council of Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. The appointment entailed the severance of his official connection with the Foreign Office, but it was one of the most interesting and lucrative posts in Europe, and he decided to accept it.

The Corporation of Foreign Bondholders was founded in 1868, its principal object being the protection of the interests of the holders of foreign securities. In consequence of the extraordinary commercial development which took place in this country about the middle of the last century and the rapid accumulation of wealth, many foreign Governments had recourse to Great Britain for borrowing money. Vast sums were advanced, in many cases with absolute recklessness, and the proceeds of the loans were too often squandered

on useless objects. The inevitable result was that one Government after another defaulted in the payment of interest on their foreign debts. The bondholders had no organisation to protect their rights, and, as the securities were "to bearer," they were not in touch with one another. Sporadic attempts were made by holding public meetings to form committees to defend the bondholders' interests, but these were not altogether successful, and both funds and organisation to carry on the fight were lacking.

Under these circumstances the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders was formed, and soon became a permanent institution of recognised importance, which exists not with the object of making profits but of protecting the interests of British investors.

One of the first countries with which the Council was brought into contact was Turkey. Between 1834 and 1854 various loans were issued on the European markets by the Turkish Government and largely subscribed for in this country. In 1875 Turkey suspended payment, and for the five years following the debt remained in total default. At the end of 1881 the principal of the defaulted External Debt of Turkey, with interest in arrears, amounted to upwards of £250,000,000. After long negotiations with the Turkish Government, it was agreed that delegates representing the various groups of the creditors should be sent to Constantinople. The Right Hon. Robert Bourke (afterwards Lord Connemara) was appointed to represent the interests of the British and Dutch bondholders, and delegates were also sent representing the French, German, Austrian, and Italian holders. A settlement was presently effected by the delegates, and embodied in a decree of the Turkish

Government dated 8/20 December 1881 and known as the Decree of Mouharrem.

Under this decree the principal and interest of the Debt were greatly reduced, but, as some compensation, the security for payment was placed on a firm and satisfactory footing. Certain taxes, such as those on tobacco, salt, stamps, spirits, silk, and fish were specifically assigned to the bondholders, and these together with certain other specified revenues were to be administered by, and paid direct to, a Council of Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt, established at Constantinople, and appointed by the representatives of the various groups of creditors. The election of the member of the Debt Council to represent the British, Belgian, and Dutch holders of Turkish bonds was vested in the Council of the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders. The first appointment made by the latter body was that of Sir Edgar Vincent, who was succeeded in 1883 by Sir Vincent Caillard. Sir Vincent Caillard held office for sixteen years, until April 1898, when he resigned, and the Council of Foreign Bondholders, as above mentioned, appointed Sir Edward Law to represent them. The office of President of the Council of Administration is held by the representative of France and Great Britain in turn, and Sir Edward, as British representative, now became President.

At the time of his appointment Law was at Athens, and for some months he combined the work of the International Financial Commission with his new duties. This tenure of office was marked by a series of important questions in connection with the administration, in which he took an active interest and played an important part. Immediately on his arrival

in Constantinople he found himself under the necessity of taking up a position which a man of less firm and decided character, especially as a newcomer, might have hesitated to adopt. The Turkish Government at the time of Law's arrival were negotiating certain cash advances in order to meet pressing necessities, and were anxious to obtain the co-operation of the Council of Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. Law strongly objected to the Debt Council undertaking new responsibilities, and also to the extension of the functions assigned to them under the decree of Mouharrem, unless some special reasons justified the departure. The position taken by Law received the cordial approval of the Council of Foreign Bondholders, and the matter ended in a satisfactory compromise, which included the introduction of reforms in the method of collecting the "Tithes" assigned to the service of certain of the loans administered by the Debt Council.

Another question with which Law was specially concerned arose in connection with Crete. At the time of the settlement of the Turkish Debt in 1881 Crete was a Vilayet of the Turkish Empire, and certain revenues of the island were included in the special securities assigned to the bondholders. Owing to the chronic state of disturbance which prevailed in the island, and the inability of the Turkish Government to keep order there, which had culminated in the Greco-Turkish war, the Powers in 1898 constituted Crete an autonomous State under a High Commissioner, subject to the suzerainty of Turkey, but free from the payment of any tribute. A declaration was at the same time made by the Powers, maintaining intact the rights

and privileges of the Ottoman Public Debt in the island. Disputes however arose with the Cretan Government as to the precise extent of these rights and the manner in which they should be exercised in the future, and meantime payments to the Debt Council at Constantinople were suspended. In November 1898, Law was specially charged by his colleagues on the Debt Council at Constantinople to attend to the question.

In January 1899 he made a special visit to Crete with the object of opening negotiations on the subject with the Cretan Government, but he failed to achieve his purpose. A few months later Law returned to the attack and paid a second visit to Crete; here he discussed the matter among others with M. Venizelos, who made a representation the reasonableness of which Law conceded. Writing from Constantinople on March 11, 1899, Law said, in reference to one of the points discussed—

... "Venizelos was full of the question of the enormous revenue which we should obtain from the salt, and of the great increase in which he said that we had no right, as it would be due to a change in the general condition of the island of Crete, unforeseen when the revenues were ceded, and brought about by the blood and sacrifices of the Cretan people, in which the Public Debt had, naturally, taken no part. This is an argument which could never hold good in a court of law, but which, it appears to me, should be considered in equity, and I have already persuaded my colleagues . . . to offer such a modification of our original proposals as to secure for the benefit of Crete a full share in all increase of revenue beyond what we might have expected to collect in normal times, under Turkish rule. . . ."

Law's attempts at finding a friendly solution seemed at the time doomed to failure, but the proposals which he then put forward were adopted by the ambassadors of the Great Powers as the basis of their decision on 15/28 June 1901, by which the question was finally closed.

At Constantinople Sir Edward Law speedily made the acquaintance of the various members of the permanent staff employed by the Debt Administration, which included Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Germans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen, and after a few weeks had formed a very precise estimate of the value of their respective services. The general standard of efficiency was a high one, but in a confidential Note which he was subsequently called upon to make concerning the personnel, he showed that weak points had not escaped him. One prominent official is described as "an absolutely honest gentleman, who is immediately satisfied by the Oriental and Orientalised minds surrounding him. It is hard to say who humbugs him most, but it is generally the last speaker;" while two others are "incompetent, quiet, elderly men, seeking and obtaining repose at the expense of the Administration." He always showed a kindly consideration for the welfare of the employés. At the Palace of the Debt—a magnificent new building in the Arab style of architecture—he noticed that there were no window blinds; he realised that this was unfair to the clerks; the architect was summoned, and despite his protests the necessary blinds were put up.

Complaints were sometimes made that the published accounts of the Debt were unintelligible. There was no proper balance-sheet, no statement of the condition of the reserve fund or of the interest obtained on general funds in hand, and no regular audit. There were also

certain irregularities in the management which could not be described as malpractices, but which he considered objectionable. These and other matters involved him in a long correspondence with the representatives of the bondholders in London, with the object of securing the strictest probity in the administration and a proper audit of accounts. His own rigid sense of honour, and his uncompromising attitude upon these questions, involved certain differences of opinion with some of his associates. It was argued that a Western standard of financial morality could hardly be applied to Constantinople, but he adhered resolutely to the line he had taken up.

The following tribute has been paid to the value of his services on the Debt Administration by one of his foreign colleagues:—

“From the moment that he took office Sir Edward showed himself to be an administrator and a financier of a high order. In spite of the many complex questions with which the Council of the Debt is called to deal, his insight, his high intelligence, and his wide experience enabled him to prove himself equal to the responsibilities of his high position. Always solicitous for the economic development of Turkey, his one object was to reconcile the interests of the bondholders with those of the Ottoman Government. He eagerly availed himself of every opportunity for philanthropic work or helping those who stood in need of assistance. Yet his acts of kindness were so unostentatious that many of them remained unknown even to those with whom he was closely associated.

“Though his period of office on the Debt was a brief

one, the work which he did was valuable and important. He was chiefly concerned with the reorganisation of the account departments, where he introduced a system of book-keeping by double entry for the revenue-collecting department. He imposed a rigid control on the Treasury, and effected considerable economies in the management of the funds. He also regulated expenditure, and took the keenest personal interest in the wellbeing of the staff, by whom he is always mentioned with feelings of gratitude. His most striking characteristics, to my mind, were an extraordinary power of grasping a situation, and a remarkable insight which enabled him to give a prompt and unfaltering decision on the many difficult questions submitted to him. His excellent judgment gave him the power of taking special circumstances into consideration and of grasping the essential details. He had a rare knowledge of human nature, and his first impressions were seldom mistaken. He combined with these qualities sympathetic and kindly instincts, which revealed themselves in everything he did.

“As an instance of this, I recollect that one day when we were hiring a cab and I was selecting the best one available, he called a dilapidated old conveyance, remarking to me that a smart turn-out would always find customers, and that it was more humane to give some one who needed it a helping hand at the expense of a trifling sacrifice of personal vanity. This trait illustrates his kindness of heart and the tact with which he always set himself to help the unfortunate whenever he came across them.”

At Constantinople Sir Edward was naturally brought

in touch with other political and commercial questions affecting the Ottoman dominions, and notably with that of railway development in Asia Minor. As a result of the Report which he had drawn up for the British Government in 1895, his opinion on this subject carried considerable weight. It will be remembered that the conclusions which he had formed were that the prospects of success for British enterprises there were very small. To some extent these views had already been justified, for the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, the only line under English control, had since defaulted in the payment of the interest due to the bondholders. About this time Law was approached by the Anatolian Railway Company and invited to join the Board of Directors. He considered, however, on patriotic grounds, that the Aidin Company had a first claim on his services, and accordingly put himself at their disposal. It appears that this offer was declined, and he then consented to join the Board of the Anatolian Company. He there became intimately associated with the group of German financiers, whose enterprising operations in Asia Minor have since attracted so much attention.

During the early part of the year 1899 negotiations were in progress for the acquisition of the Smyrna-Aidin line by the Anatolian Railway Company. The scheme eventually fell through, but it is noteworthy that it found a strong supporter in Law. As it was well known that he always worked for the advancement of British interests in the Near East, his attitude on the railway question caused some surprise. But he had realised, while others had not, that there was no future for railway enterprises in Asia

Minor upon the lines adopted by the English companies. He also held that in the matter of railway development English and German interests were not necessarily opposed to one another: the representatives of both countries might co-operate for their mutual benefit, and this was the view which he put before the Foreign Office. He admitted that if the Anatolian Company were to acquire the Smyrna-Aidin line it would mean the extinction of all important British interest in existing railway enterprises in Anatolia. But the main object of the Deutsche Bank and the German financiers was to obtain the support of the London money market for their enterprise. British capital would not be attracted unless a share in the management and control of the concern were offered at the same time. This much he had gathered from his connection with the Board of the Anatolian Railway Company, and especially Dr Siemens, of whom he had the highest opinion; and though such admissions could not constitute an adequate guarantee for the future, he pointed out that the Germans were giving tangible proof of the good faith of their declared intentions. They would hardly have pressed him to become a director had they been really anxious to exclude British influence. Moreover, they proposed that an extensive allotment of Anatolian shares should form part of the consideration for the Aidin line, and the holding of shares must always be the best guarantee for a voice in the management.

Under existing political conditions it was hopeless for the Smyrna-Aidin Company or any other British enterprise to hope for fair-play from the Ottoman Government. Government opposition destroyed the value of

existing properties and nipped all projects for the future in the bud. But if British and German interests were allied the position would be different. Full value would be given for existing property and reasonable opportunities would be offered for profitable investment. For the time being, if progress were to be made, British interests must shelter themselves under the wing of Germany. In a few years the whole political position might well be reversed, and the Germans would then find it to their interest to admit the preponderance of British influence in such matters as railway enterprise.

Law expressed the same views in a Memorandum which he was commanded to draw up for King Edward, at that time Prince of Wales, on the whole question, with special reference to the much discussed Bagdad Railway. He recapitulated the reasons, which had already been set out in his Report on the Railways of Asiatic Turkey, for his conviction that any route to India by the Euphrates Valley and the Persian Gulf must have its northern terminus on the Bosphorus, and not on the Syrian coast. The Germans had realised the importance of this fact, and saw that any overland route through the Ottoman dominions must be in direct communication with the great European system of railways. For this reason they had devoted all their energies to the Anatolian line, which started on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and already extended to Konia and Angora. They were now making every effort to secure a concession for the extension by the Euphrates or Tigris valley, to Bagdad and Bassorah.

They also realised that British co-operation was highly desirable, both for political reasons and to pro-

vide the necessary funds. With the object of securing the co-operation of the English money market they had put forward their scheme for amalgamating with the Smyrna - Aidin Company, proposing to buy the Aidin shares or exchange them for Anatolian shares, to guarantee the interest on the bonds, and to give the Aidin Company a share in the Directorate. In Law's opinion the Aidin Company had made a grave mistake in declining this offer, and he remarked that they had undoubtedly been influenced in their decision by an active Press campaign, which had represented the Germans as swallowing up the last independent British enterprise in Turkey.

His own view was that the German group which controlled the Anatolian Railway would not be content until they had completed a line to the Persian Gulf. They would eventually achieve this object, with or without British co-operation. It was therefore all to the advantage of England that we should co-operate, at a moment when our help was valuable, and so obtain a voice in the future control of a line of such immense strategic importance. Recent events have demonstrated his prescience. His views were not accepted at the time, but until the end of his life he persisted in his endeavour to bring about the co-operation of England in the Bagdad Railway scheme. He held that if the line were completed, the interests of the Empire demanded that it should be to a large extent under British control. In spite of repeated discouragements he felt bound to persevere for this end, and it remained a source of the bitterest disappointment to him that his efforts were unavailing.

Shortly after entering upon his duties at Constanti-

nople, Law was invited to accept the post of Financial Member of Council in India. The offer was an extremely flattering one, for the Financial Member discharges duties analogous to those of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the added prestige which the East accords to a great official position. But after careful consideration Sir Edward declined the post on the grounds that he did not feel qualified to accept it, and that he was too deeply interested in his work in Turkey to leave it. The latter reason was probably the one which weighed most with him. He hated to leave unfinished work which he had undertaken, and he had set his heart upon improving the financial position of the Ottoman Empire. He always liked the Turks, and formed a high opinion of their possibilities as a nation: he was convinced that Turkey was necessary in Europe for the maintenance of the balance of power, and that her continued existence in Europe was necessary to Greece.

Turkey affords a series of surprises for the travelling Englishman with preconceived ideas about its inhabitants. The stupid, corrupt, and tyrannical official becomes a polished man of the world, speaking French and German with a facility which is denied to most Englishmen; his chief concern appears to be the happiness and welfare of those with whom he is brought in contact. The brutal soldiery, the instrument of Mohammedan oppression, is represented by a pleasant fellow, ill-clad, underpaid, and often underfed, who declines with quiet dignity any offer of money for services rendered. The Mohammedan population, the so-called scourge of the Christian races, are often in real life simple farmers and country gentlemen, contented with their

homes and their crops, with all a peaceful man's horror of revolutionary bands, and gendarmes, and other disturbers of the amenities of rural life.

Law had learnt to know and appreciate the Turks, or as he described them, "the real Turks," as distinguished from the creatures of the Hamidian *régime*. He saw their shortcomings, but he also recognised their good qualities, and always expressed the confident belief that a regenerated flourishing Turkey could one day be created by means of this class.

His relations with the late Sir Nicholas O'Connor, at that time British Ambassador, were of the most friendly description. The two Irishmen were in agreement upon all broad principles of policy, and delighted in one another's company. He was also on the best of terms with Sir Hamilton Lang, the President of the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Constantinople, and with the brilliant M. Auboyneau, now Manager in Paris. Thus he formed a link between high politics and high finance, and as such was able to strengthen British influence at this somewhat critical period in the history of the Ottoman Empire. His connection with the powerful group of German financiers there has already been mentioned, and subsequent events have shown the soundness of his judgment with regard to the rivalry between British and German interests, and of the course which he himself adopted. It was a matter for general regret when he severed his connection with the Anatolian Railway Company.

A friend, who worked under him in Constantinople, has given in the few notes which are here reproduced a vivid picture of the impression which Law produced on him.

"I made the acquaintance of the late Sir Edward (then simply Major) Law, at Constantinople.

"I remained in casual touch with him for the following nineteen years, and, for one or two brief intervals, I had the happiness of collaborating, in a modest way, with the most admirable personality whom it has been my lot to meet.

"His remarkable powers of intellect, equally ready to grasp a leading principle or seize the most delicate detail of any business he happened to be engaged on, impressed me less than his bigness of heart, his patience and sympathy and his heroic devotion to duty.

"Dear friends of his have already, in notices published in 'The Times' shortly after his death, described better than I can the extraordinary, and apparently incompatible, combination of mental and moral qualities of this man, who was a shrewd man of the world and a most able modern man of business, administrator and financier, and, at one and the same time, intensely religious—religious in no sense as regards dogma, but imbued with the inner sense of all religion.

"It is not, to my mind, Sir Edward Law's success in his varied worldly career, a matter of public knowledge, nor yet the unknown silent, but deep and ineffaceable traces of that cheery kindliness, unselfishness, and generous human sympathy which have illumined his passage through this life, and in every clime and stratum of humanity in which his lot has thrown him, that give the measure of his extraordinary personality and will-power, but the remarkable fact of his having combined the practical application of his religious ideal—an almost

Quixotic devotion to duty,—with success in the modern sense.

“Of course, it was not all plain sailing. The biggest storm occurred, so far as I know, during that portion of Sir Edward’s career which he passed in Persia, with the result that he was well-nigh shipwrecked, as regards his Foreign Office connection.

“Rightly or wrongly, he considered that his then chief, Sir H. Drummond-Wolff, was ill-advised in an affair of Russian schemes for Persian railways, and regardless of consequences, though with his eyes wide open, he ventured on an active and energetic opposition to these schemes. The result was, as he afterwards told me: ‘Practically ten years of my official career have been blotted out; I have been dead to the Foreign Office for that period.’

“Later on, in Constantinople, when President of the Council of the Public Debt Administration, the tortuous undercurrents and mud-shoals of Turkish finance, in which no straight steering is ever possible, practically brought him to a standstill for a while. He spent over a year in the post, and worked very hard, with practically no result to show for it.

“So far as ability and personal energy went, he towered head and shoulders over any of his possible rivals in Turkish financial administration; and an unscrupulous man, possessing the same opportunities and abilities as he did, could have rapidly carved out a big fortune for himself. He left Constantinople a poor man.

“His nomination as Financial Member of Council for India offered fortunately a practical opportunity for the fruitful exercise of abilities which, unless totally perverted and misdirected (from Law’s point of view), would

have been, to my mind, hopelessly frittered away in Turkish financial work. He was a self-appointed apostle of daylight and sound principles in Turkish finance. But the rulers of the country which alone could have gained any benefit from such reform were even greater partisans of obscurity and unsoundness than the foreign and Levantine bankers who did profitable business with them at their country's expense.

“Leaving aside Sir Edward Law's work in liquidating the Public Debt Administration's claims on Cretan revenue, his main efforts while President of the Administration were devoted to endeavouring to set the accounts in order. Apart from the amounts actually paid through the Ottoman Bank for interest and sinking fund, the accounts of the Administration were quite obscure; they were, in fact, ordinary Turkish accounts, but little improved upon since the Administration had taken them over eighteen years before.

“It is necessary to explain the leading—I will not say principles, but characteristics of Turkish accounts. In the first place, the bare cash movement is the only thing taken notice of—the incoming and the outgoing of the actual coin. Ordinarily, the inscription of cash payments is made in one separate set of registers, split up into vertical columns of perplexing statistical appearance, and with a confusing and haphazard development of detail which recalls the saying, ‘It is impossible to see the forest owing to the trees’; while the inscription of cash receipts is kept quite apart in a similar fashion. Exceptionally, the double movement of receipts and expenditure is jumbled together, in the same set of registers, by the aid of inscriptions in different coloured inks—red and black, or violet and black. Regularly,

and without any exception whatsoever, no balance is established. Neither is any capital account ever kept to show the value of stocks, buildings, &c. Depreciation (in accounts, at least) is unknown.

“Sir Edward Law’s energies were absorbed for the best part of a year in getting his colleagues on the Council to simply adopt the principle of establishing a cash balance in the accounts. It was not till six years after his departure that this principle received a practical application of a more or less primitive kind.

“He strove in vain to convince his colleagues of the necessity of keeping account of the value of stock and plant in the case of the Salt Monopoly, which is the largest source of revenue, as well as the sole industrial business managed by the Administration. Seven years after his departure, this principle was finally adopted by his successors, but even up till now (three years later still) it has not been applied.

“These trivial details serve to show the fearful wastage of energy that a man of Law’s character would have had to undergo in such a *milieu*. And, strange to say, he left Constantinople for India, as a matter of duty involving personal sacrifice. The change of climate meant, of course, a certain strain on his health. It was not that, however, which he regretted so much as abandoning the task he had set himself in the way of cleaning Turkish finance. I cannot really say whether he nourished illusions on the subject, or whether it was the amazing difficulty of this apparently forlorn hope that attracted him and stimulated his indomitable pluck. The fact remains that he regretted going.”

"Several years earlier, when Sir Edward Law was acting as Commercial Attaché at Constantinople, I had had an opportunity of observing for the first time his marvellous capacity for work. While under medical treatment, owing to a return of old enteric troubles, and considerably weakened by physical suffering, he carried on, with unflagging energy, and with as much rapidity as three ordinary men could have done, the treble task of investigating certain irregularities at the Consulate-General, acting as *rapporteur* in an important arbitration case between the Italian and Persian Governments (concerning claims for damages by an Italian trading firm), and, finally, negotiating with representatives of the Turkish Foreign Office the basis of a new commercial treaty. At the same time he kept up his current work and his daily intercourse with Turkish and other officials. He was studying the then loan operations of the Ottoman Bank, and had frequent interviews with Agop Pasha, the Minister of Finance.

"I remember his description of Agop Pasha, as a perfect type of conscientious Oriental Minister. 'He has got those truthful deep brown eyes; blue eyes are generally deceitful, but brown eyes are sincere. He looks you full in the face with those soft brown eyes, and calmly tells you the most thundering lie without moving a muscle; and he has no consciousness of doing wrong, for he feels that he is faithfully serving a master of whom he considers himself simply the slave.'"

It would be impossible to give here a complete portrait gallery of Law's friends and acquaintances in Constantinople. George Meredith once said of a friend that "he had the genius of hospitality." The remark

might have been applied with equal justice to Law. Perhaps it would be truer still to say that he had a genius for society. Like all our best gifts, it was not an acquisition, but the indulgence of a natural bent of character. Law was sociable by instinct; he liked to be with his kind, and he found something to interest him in every one. The one pleasure in which he indulged almost intemperately was sitting up late into the night talking. The greater part of his large stores of information had been gathered in this way. Whenever he heard of a man who knew some particular thing well, Law would make his acquaintance, carry him off to the club, or bring him home to dinner and get him to talk. It would be ridiculous to pretend that he did this from the rather dreary motive of acquiring information; he did it because it gave him the keenest pleasure. It is none the less true that this bent of character served him well in his career, and that he got to know and to like all sorts and conditions of men of whose very existence more conventional diplomatists were not even aware. A friend of his in the Foreign Office once said that Law knew every scamp in Europe. Perhaps he did, but he knew the most illustrious men in every walk of life too. The remark probably meant no more than that he sought out men in quarters with which the Foreign Office is but little familiar. In Constantinople, on his first visit, during the negotiations for the Anglo-Turkish Treaty, instead of living at the smart club where he was expected to have taken up his quarters, he preferred to take a room on the third floor at a club mainly frequented by business men. Probably the Attachés of the British Embassy elevated their eyebrows. But the

homely flight of stairs was climbed by Turkish officials of high standing, and by men like Von der Goltz, who re-created the Turkish Army; Vambéry, the great explorer; and the Hon. George Curzon, with whom Law was afterwards to be associated in the Government of India.

In all relations of life he possessed the rather rare gift of being able to differ without offence; he never shunned points of difference in conversation, and he was surprised and annoyed at the habit (which he declared was common with the English) of not expressing difference unless angry. "I can't get an Englishman to give me his opinion unless I strike fire from him," he used to say. The search for points of contact rather than repulsion, which characterises English society, is perhaps a reaction against the savage and aggressive insolence which passed for wit with an earlier generation; but it may easily degenerate into cowardice, and the more masculine virtue, which Law possessed in an eminent degree, is to differ without bitterness. This frankness of speech he retained even when talking with Royalty, and it is perhaps the secret of the confidence which was reposed in him by so many Royal personages, such as the King and Queen of Greece and the Greek Princes, by the Empress Frederick, by King Edward and Queen Alexandra, and others.

Because he always gave a straight answer, and always took a genuine human interest in his interlocutor, he was very widely consulted. A distinguished Russian lady once said to Lady Law: "*Je crois que votre mari est un conseiller-général pour tous ceux qui valent quelque chose, de quelque pays qu'ils soient!*" His relations with dis-

tinguished persons are those most likely to be recorded, but they do not give a true measure of his warm personal interest in all those with whom he happened to come in contact. He would establish that intimate human relationship in which the accident of wealth or social position vanishes, with shopkeepers, old soldiers who had fallen out of a job, or clerks in the office of which he was in charge. Lady Law recalls a small episode in her own experience in Greece: "Last year [1909] I was passing one day in front of a big stationer's shop in Athens, and the proprietor—who is, by the way, one of the cleverest business men in Greece—was at the door, and asked me to go in. After having scanned my face, he said to me: 'You look better now, I'm glad to see. I have not forgotten what you looked like at that funeral' [he meant Sir Edward's]. 'Come here.' Then, tapping with his hand one of the counters of his shop, he added: 'It is up here that he often used to jump like a school-boy and sit and chat with me, either coming from the Palace or from the Prime Minister's, and speak like the sage he was.'" The picture of Law hitching himself up on a shopkeeper's counter for a talk is one that all his friends can realise. It may be unusual in the *Corps Diplomatique*, but it helps to make us understand how he got his intimate knowledge of foreign countries.

A man who recognised no class barriers in his own community is the one who is most likely to cross the gulf which usually separates Europeans from Orientals. In Constantinople, as afterwards in India, Law made friends with many Mohammedans; during his work at the Debt he more than once saw the Sheik-ul-Islam,

whose acquaintance few Europeans are able to make, and he delighted in the company of Hamdi Beg, his colleague and neighbour. His best friends were among those whom he called the "Old Turks"—men of the old school, who have never learned the ways of Europe, but who retain uncontaminated the dignity and austerity which are among the finest traditions of the Moslem world. It was through men of this class that he expected the regeneration of Turkey to be accomplished. It was, of course, with diplomatists that his work threw him most frequently into contact, and his masterly knowledge of European politics was due to the fact that he knew personally the men who count in most of the Chancelleries in Europe. In the early days at St Petersburg he was the constant inmate of the house of Count and Countess Wolkenstein, the Austrian Ambassador, and he there made the acquaintance of Count Aerenthal and Count Paul Esterhazy, who were in those days his intimate companions. His friendly relations with Wischniegradsky, the great Finance Minister of Russia, and later with De Witte, gave him exceptional opportunities for understanding the economic situation of the Tsar's dominions. In Italy he made the acquaintance of Count (now Prince) Bülow—then German Ambassador, at his house on the Capitol, which the gifted Countess Bülow—a granddaughter of Lord Acton—had made a centre of Italian and international society in Rome, the Laws were frequent guests. In Rome also, Baron Sonnino, Mr Luzzati, the Marquis di San Giuliano, Commendatore Luigi Bodio, and others, became his friends. His acquaintance in France was equally large and varied.

In England those best able to judge had recognised

the value of his services. His late Majesty King Edward VII. honoured him with his esteem, and he was held in high regard by all competent to judge of foreign politics. His high standard of public duty had procured for him one responsible position after another, in each of which he had acquitted himself with marked success. It was this sense of duty more than anything else which finally induced him to accept the offer, which was now repeated, of the post of Financial Member of Council in India, and at the end of the year 1899 he returned to London to make the necessary preparations for the change.

In the twelve years that he had been in the service of the Foreign Office he had made for himself a European reputation.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDIA—GENERAL.

THE Laws reached India at the beginning of the hot weather, in time for Sir Edward to be present, as a spectator, at the debate in the Viceroy's Council upon the Budget introduced by his predecessor Sir Clinton Dawkins. On the day after their arrival, death came very near to them and to the whole family of Sir Clinton Dawkins, with whom they were staying, with a suddenness which is still characteristic of life in the tropics. Lady Law had brought with her an Italian maid: in spite of the strict orders given her, this young girl drank some water directly from the tap, with the consequence that she was taken with violent pains in the night. "She spoke nothing but Italian, and so I was called," relates Lady Law. "As I did not return, Edward came to fetch me; he understood better than I what her illness might be. We nursed her ourselves for several hours; the doctor whom we had sent for did not come, and so Edward went himself to find him. When they returned together, the poor girl had her arms round me; the doctor, horrified, pulled me away and almost threw me out of the room. Edward was

sent after me. It was a bad case of cholera. On the following day, in the afternoon, our first walk abroad in Calcutta was to follow the hearse of the unhappy girl to the cemetery, in company with an Italian priest whom we had been fortunate enough to find for her at the last hour." The Laws and all their household were placed in strict quarantine for a few days, and then, after disinfection, they were allowed to proceed to Simla.

Law noticed the great change that had taken place in India during the thirty years he had been away from it. In the first place, the political centre of gravity had been altered. In a private letter he wrote: "When I was in India as a subaltern thirty-five years ago, the opinion among the general public appeared to be that many of the Indian princes were disloyal and possibly dangerous; that the Muhamadans, particularly in the North-Western Provinces, were disloyal and certainly dangerous in the large towns; that the peasantry generally were contented and peaceful, Europeans being treated with respect and friendliness in all rural districts. . . . To-day I believe that the princes are as a rule loyal, the feeling of loyalty being encouraged in some cases, and particularly with the Rajpoot chiefs and Sikhs, by a sentiment of chivalrous devotion to the great Padishah, who is no longer a mere name in India but a vivid and honoured personality; further, many chiefs and probably particularly those whose sentiment of loyalty is weakest, are influenced by a perfect understanding of the fact that the disappearance of the 'Raj' might easily lead to their downfall, either through an uprising of their people or through the active hostility of ambitious neighbouring princes. The antagonistic feeling which prevailed among Muhamadans in certain territories in 1870, and

which was probably a consequence of the Mutiny, would appear to have almost, if not entirely, died down; a result of economic progress under British rule had been the enrichment of the Hindu population at the expense of the Muhamadan, owing to the higher standard of education and keener commercial instincts of the former; many of the lately powerful Muhamadan families have lost their fortunes and therewith their prestige, and I should say that the Muhamadan upper classes now look to the British for sympathy and support in the unequal economic struggle against the Hindu, whose general character and temperament they despise. The peasantry are still quiescent and on the whole doubtless fairly content, but some are beginning to read newspapers, and I fear that the influence of the only journals likely to reach them is pernicious. . . . Moreover, in the neighbourhood of military cantonments, which are scattered throughout the country, recent unfortunate circumstances have aroused and excited a regrettable spirit of animosity between the peasants and the British military garrison. Thirty years ago this did not exist."

Since Law's first visit to India, education had been widely extended, and he was of the opinion that it had been a very doubtful benefit. "Nihilism in Russia," he used to say, "was the result of putting higher education within the reach of quick wits who could learn anything from books and pass competitive examinations, but who could not assimilate knowledge or reason for themselves. We are doing our best to make Nihilists of the Indians." In an article published in 'Blackwood's Magazine' (August 1907), after he had left India, Law further developed this idea. "At an early stage of acquaintance with Western ideas, the Indian generally breaks away from

the traditions of his forefathers and all the steady principles of respect for parents and authority which they inculcate. He frequently adopts Herbert Spencer and Stuart Mill as his prophets, without the counterpoise of the precepts of the Christian religion, teaching submission to Cæsar, reciprocal obligations to the neighbour, and the fulfilment of duty in that state of life to which God may be pleased to call him. Without this counterpoise or that of his abandoned Indian conservative tradition, his studies of the great modern writers disturb the balance of his untrained mind, and too often all that he is capable of learning from his favourite authors is an exaggerated spirit of individualism and negation of authority which are the immediate stepping-stones to Nihilism.

“In common justice I must here state that, notwithstanding my severe criticisms on the ordinary results of the class of education now offered to young Indians desirous of entering Government service, I have had the pleasure of finding among several of the Indian officials of the Indian Finance Department excellent solid brains and capacity. There are now men, including Bengalis, serving the Government of India who are thoroughly fitted to take a high place in any European administration, and who need not fear Western competition. . . . I am not sure that men of this class always receive the full measure of promotion which, in my opinion, is advisable and is their due.”

In April, as already mentioned, the Laws made their way up to Simla. To a European few experiences are more delightful than the change from the tropical heat and enervating air of Calcutta to the fresh breeze and northern pines of Simla. When the Laws were in India,

the very journey still partook of romance. The traveller whose eyes had been wearied by the never-ending level of sunburnt plain, left his railway carriage in the early morning to find himself in the unfamiliar presence of steep hills, which, thickly covered with tropical vegetation at the lower slopes, rose tier above tier, and ridge above ridge, in the clear Himalayan air. Into this mountain world the traveller penetrated in a tonga—a two-wheeled cart drawn from the pole by a pair of ponies, which galloped up the white road that wound between the hills. The ponies used to be changed every seven miles, and at every halt the traveller from the scorched plains perceived signs of the higher altitude and cooler air. At the early stages mango-trees and banana abounded; at higher elevations these gave way to the stone pine; then the oak and rhododendron began to appear along northern slopes, and at the end of an eight hours' drive Simla came suddenly into view, with Jakko clothed in sombre deodar to the right and the eternal snows behind. Simla is set in a wilderness of mountains which are very sparsely inhabited, but it is itself a considerable town, and it has almost entirely lost the rural character which the chroniclers of the Victorian era assign to it. In order to get into the quiet of the mountains, the Laws hired a cottage in the woods of Mashobra, a forest-covered ridge about six or seven miles from Simla, and used there to spend the week-ends. Law found the quiet of their woodland cottage so propitious to work, that when a suitable occasion presented itself he went even farther into the wilds to Narkanda, which is situated on the Thibet road, forty miles from Simla, and ordered his chaprasis (or messengers) to bring him his papers from the office day by

day. This occasioned the first (and last) manifestation of insubordination among the Laws' Indian servants. Lady Law thus recounts what then happened: "I was already on horseback, and Edward was about to mount, when his secretary came to tell him that the chaprasis had decided not to obey the orders given them, never having been used, they said, to carry official papers so far or so regularly. While the secretary was speaking, the chaprasis and their Jemadar (foreman, *i.e.* head-messenger) stood behind the secretary. Edward did not falter for a second. 'Have those men changed,' he said quietly, 'and see that my despatch-boxes reach me to-morrow at the time I told you.' The next day we looked out with curiosity to see who would turn up. It was our own familiar chaprasis whom we saw arrive."

Lady Law relates another anecdote which indicates the trust and affection with which they eventually came to be regarded by their Indian servants. "The difficulties of those early days," says Lady Law, "had been altogether overcome, when in Calcutta my life for eight days was in imminent danger. Edward, in spite of the sick-nurses and of the Budget to which he had to devote himself at the same time, used to sit up through the night in order to look after me. He always found at his side one of our high-caste Indian servants, who, setting aside his scruples of religion, did not hesitate to help him to prepare the invalid dishes by which my strength was kept up."

That the Laws were able, during their short stay in India, to inspire this personal devotion is remarkable, because they were obliged to recruit their servants, about fifty in number, in Simla or Calcutta; in these

two towns European notions have made disastrous progress, to the confusion of good housewives; the cash *nexus* has there replaced the personal relation which used to bind together the fortunes of master and servant; in towns or districts farther from the highway on which European ideas travel eastwards, the old Indian tradition still holds its own, and the resident Englishman who does not succeed in surrounding himself with loyal and trustworthy servants must be singularly unfortunate in his choice—or his temper. Law's temperament was that best suited to evoke the loyalty of Indian servants: the Irish clansman's appeal to his tribal chief, "Spend me and fend me," exactly characterised his relations with his dependants; he exacted from them a full measure of service whenever he needed it, and in return helped them lavishly in all their troubles, and interested himself in their happiness and advancement. All those who were dependent upon him evoked his kindly interest. At Simla he concerned himself with the pecuniary difficulties of the subordinate clerks in the Financial Department; he assembled them all at his own house, Inverarm, and persuaded them to form a Society of Mutual Help. He was the first to take shares, so as to give the Society a start, and he constantly urged his subordinates to interest themselves in it; even when he left India, he was always eager to hear of its progress.

Lady Law has recorded the apprehension with which his prodigal charity sometimes filled her:—

"Every day, in Simla or Calcutta, letters reached Edward from all parts of vast India, asking for pecuniary assistance. He never refused. An adequate cheque used to leave next day, and this often used to frighten me. His ministerial salary, large as it was, was not

sufficient to live up to the position and entertain on the scale Edward himself thought necessary. I used sometimes to say to him: 'Think a little of your own self. Your work is overwhelming, the way you do it, and you have no private means. Put by part of your salary for the remainder of your life.' 'No,' he would answer, quietly smiling, 'no. This money comes from the Indians and to the Indians it must return.' I would insist, and add: 'But the Indians require you; they require your work. It is natural that they should recompense you.' 'No, my child,' he would reply, 'don't insist. You would not be the wife you are, if you did.'"

The Laws' house, Inverarm, was perched upon one of the highest peaks in Simla, and after his work he loved to come out to garden in the miniature plot of level ground round the house, whence he could see the horizon of the plains in the dim distance, and on the other side the nearer semicircle of everlasting snow. Here he entertained lavishly, and as he and Lady Law were admirable hosts, their house was certainly the most interesting in Simla at the time. Lady Law was never well in the trying climate of Calcutta, and never spent a whole season there. In pursuance of her promise to visit her father once a year, she usually left India when the Government came down from Simla. But though his residence in Calcutta hardly ever extended to four months in the year, Law took a big house there and constantly filled it with guests, his sister (Miss M. Law) or his niece (Miss Law) being specially invited to India to play the part of hostess in Lady Law's absence.

In Calcutta Law found something of the free unofficial atmosphere in which he throve best, and he was able to help forward many Government measures by his hearty

and confidential relations with the unofficial classes. Soldiers, bankers, men of business, and Indian Members of the Legislative Council, as well as the Greek Great Archimandrite and members of the Greek colony, all met at his table, and all found that they could talk frankly and easily with him and even criticise his administration without awakening his hostility. The present writer has still a vision of the Hon. Mr Gokhale and Law playing billiards and discussing Indian finance till late into the night; the red Maratha turban and the Englishman's shirt-sleeves would appear alternately upon the table in the glow of the lamps and then be withdrawn into the shade, as the two men stopped playing to debate a proposition. Law used to say that it was the duty of Members of Council to see more of the Indian colleagues attached to them for legislative purposes than was then usual, and he himself set the example he wished to see followed. The need for such social intercourse in Calcutta is very marked, because the Legislative Council has no house of its own where its members can meet in an informal way; it has no counterpart to the smoking-room of the House of Commons, in which it is said that the real work of the House is done. The meetings of the Council resemble the meetings of a Royal Commission; all the work is formal and ceremonious; there are no social sympathies to soften the asperities of political conflict; a practical business man like Law knew that there are many avenues to conciliation and compromise which can only be explored in private talk, and he thought it the duty of officials to remedy by the hospitality of their own houses the defects of the Indian system. His kindliness and warm feelings made it possible for him to retain not only friendly but affectionate relations with those whom

he was obliged to oppose in the Council Chamber. The present writer, on one occasion, as an unofficial member, opposed a certain bill introduced by the Government. Law attacked me warmly in a strong and emphatic speech which effectually disposed of my opposition. I shall always remember how he came to me when the Council had broken up, and realising, perhaps, the soreness of a younger man at his public discomfiture, put his arm round me, and said: "You know, my dear fellow, I had to speak like that." I was not the only additional member who was won by his kindly human manner, and the Government gained by his popularity.

It would not be right to linger longer over personal reminiscences; in Law's career in India the centre of interest lies in the work he was able to achieve as Minister of Finance, and in order to make this intelligible it is necessary to set out with some fulness the financial problems with which he had to deal, and the methods by which he solved them. The chronological plan hitherto followed in these memoirs will therefore be abandoned in the two following chapters, and attention be concentrated upon the subject-matter of Law's work in India. The first of these two chapters consists of a very lucid statement of his financial policy by Sir William Meyer, who worked under him in the Financial Department, and who afterwards subjected Indian administration to a comprehensive and masterly survey as member of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation. The second chapter was written by a friend with whom Law was in those days closely associated, and contains a more general account of the part he took in directing the policy of the Indian Government during the years that Lord Curzon was Governor-General.

CHAPTER IX.

SIR EDWARD LAW'S WORK AS MEMBER OF THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S COUNCIL IN INDIA.

1900-1905.

BY SIR WILLIAM MEYER, K.C.I.E., I.C.S.

SIR EDWARD LAW joined the Council of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in April 1900, as Member in charge of the Finance and Commerce Department. In reviewing his career in India, it is necessary to preface it by some remarks as to the character of the new position which he now undertook. The salient feature of Indian administration is that there are two sets of Government in that country: (*a*) the Provincial Governments, headed by a Governor, a Lieutenant-Governor, or a Chief Commissioner, which administer the affairs of the principal Provinces in subordination to (*b*) the Central Government of India, who are themselves subordinate to the Home Government as represented by the Secretary of State for India. The Provincial or Local Governments deal mainly with matters of ordinary internal administration, such as police and jails, civil and criminal justice, educa-

tion, medical and sanitary operations, and public works, but are subject to the control of the Government of India in matters of general policy affecting these, as also in a variety of specific details, mainly of a financial or quasi-financial character. Each of the principal Provinces has its own sources of revenue from which it meets the items of expenditure which fall upon it.

The Government of India, besides supervising matters of Provincial administration, retain in their hands, generally speaking, questions relating to external affairs and relations with the principal Native States, defence, general taxation, currency, debt, tariffs, posts and telegraphs, railways, and accounts and audit. The affairs of the Government of India are administered by the Viceroy or Governor-General in Council. The Viceroy himself takes the Foreign Department, and each of the ordinary Members of Council has his own portfolio, in regard to which he is in much the same position as a Secretary of State in England; that is to say, he deals on his own responsibility with matters of ordinary administrative routine. On questions of a larger character and those which involve the overruling of a Provincial Government, the Viceroy has to be referred to, and the Members of Council meet periodically as a Cabinet to discuss important questions of general policy and matters in which there have been differences of opinion between different departments. When Sir Edward Law joined the Council he was one of five ordinary members who held, respectively, the portfolios of Finance and Commerce, Home—with Revenue and Agriculture, Public Works, Military, and Legislation, while the Commander-in-Chief was at that time an

extraordinary Member of the Council, but without a portfolio.¹

Lord Curzon had then been Viceroy since January 1899, while Lord Kitchener was to join the Council as Commander-in-Chief at the end of 1902.

Postal as well as commercial affairs were at that time under the control of the Finance Department, so that Sir Edward's work in the Government of India may be taken as roughly analogous to that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the President of the Board of Trade, and the Postmaster-General in a British Cabinet.

His new functions were thus of a manifold character. He had to deal directly with questions relating to the budgets and finances of the country as a whole—currency and banking (the Government of India have largely to be their own bankers), debt, the post office, tariffs, customs, and trade policy. He had likewise to supervise Provincial finance—dealing with the financial settlements under which the Government of India fix for each Province the amount of revenue to which the latter shall be entitled and the character of the expenditure which it shall incur. He had also to scrutinise and pass the annual Provincial budgets, and incorporate them with that of India as a whole.

He was further concerned with questions relating to the administration and collection of the opium, excise, salt, stamp, income-tax, and customs revenues, although

¹ Since then the distribution of work has been altered. The old Military Department has been abolished, and the Commander-in-Chief, as head of the Army Department, is now in direct charge of military matters, while the portfolios of the ordinary Members are as follows: 1, Finance; 2, Home; 3, Revenue, Agriculture, and Ordinary Public Works; 4, Commerce and Industry; 5, Legislative; and 6, Education.

the local administration of these was largely left to the Provincial Governments. He was likewise specially concerned, as Finance Member, with questions relating to the leave, salaries, and pensions of public officers; and the Indian Finance Department, like the Home Treasury, has to deal with all questions of expenditure of any importance or departure from ordinary departmental rules coming up either from the Local Governments or from the spending departments of the Government of India.

Lastly, as a Member of the Viceroy's Cabinet, Sir Edward was concerned with all really important matters relating to the internal and external affairs of India.

The financial position when Sir Edward joined the Government of India was specially critical in regard to currency matters, and to explain this it is necessary to make a short digression into the past. India was formerly a silver-standard country. Its standard coin was the rupee, which used to be the equivalent of a British florin (2s.), and any one who chose could bring silver bullion to the Indian mints and get it transmuted there into rupees. The Indian Government, however, had to meet large sterling expenditure in England in payment of military charges incurred there, leave and pension allowances, stores, interest on debt, and so forth. On the other hand, the normal condition of Indian trade was that of a large balance of exports over imports, and consequently there was a bullion debt which had to be made up to India. Balancing one of these factors against the other, the Secretary of State's practice was to liquidate the sterling obligations of the Government of India by putting up for tender bills on

the Indian treasuries, which were purchased by those who had obligations in India which required liquidation there. Obviously, however, the sterling equivalents which the Secretary of State obtained for his rupee bills were determined by the current exchange value of silver as compared with gold, since a debtor to India need not go to the Secretary of State at all, but might defray his liabilities by exporting silver bullion to that country.

From 1873 onwards there was a steady fall in the exchange value of silver, with the result that the sterling value of the rupee dropped continuously from 2s. or thereabouts to 15d., the average rate of exchange for the year 1892-93. This state of things put the Government of India to enormous financial embarrassment. The vagaries of exchange were incalculable, and their most carefully prepared budgets were constantly being disturbed, and converted into deficit results, by drops in exchange, which eventually necessitated the imposition of fresh taxation. The general economic conditions of the country were also prejudicially affected. Trade with gold countries suffered from the absence of any definite exchange conditions, while the investment of outside capital, of which India stands so much in need, was hindered by the fact that possible investors feared, not without good reason, that the rupee returns on their capital would amount to a steadily diminishing quantity in sterling.

Accordingly, after various unsuccessful efforts to promote international agreement for fixing the relative values of gold and silver, the Government of India were compelled in 1893 to close their mints to the free coinage of silver, and to declare that such coinage should

hereafter only be carried out by the Government and as the Government thought fit to do so. The object of this move was of course to enhance the exchange value of the rupee by increased competition for the Secretary of State's Council bills, since those who had money to remit to India could no longer do so by the former alternative method of sending out silver bullion for coinage. The success of this policy was, however, slow, and it was not till the year 1898-99 that the rupee reached the exchange value which it was intended to obtain for it by the policy of 1893—viz., rs. 4d.

This point, however, only marked the first stage of the problem before the Government of India, since it is impossible to obtain permanent fixity of exchange without the introduction of a practical gold standard. This necessity was recognised by the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State in 1898 to consider the currency question, under the presidency of Sir Henry Fowler (subsequently Lord Wolverhampton), which submitted its report in 1899. The Committee held that "any system without a visible gold currency would be looked upon with distrust," and accordingly recommended making British sovereigns and half-sovereigns legal tender and current coin in India, and the subsequent opening of the Indian mints to the free coinage of gold. The Committee further advised that while gold should be given in exchange for rupees, on demand, as far as possible, no legal obligation to this effect should be accepted, and as regards the resumption of rupee coinage, it held that this should not be done until the proportion of gold in the currency was found to exhaust the requirements of the public. The Committee also recommended that "any profit on the coinage of rupees

should not be credited to the revenue, or held as a portion of the ordinary balance of the Government of India, but should be kept in gold as a special reserve, entirely apart from the Paper Currency Reserve and the ordinary treasury balances." These recommendations were accepted, and in 1899 an Act was passed making British gold coins legal tender in India at the rate of fifteen rupees to the sovereign, and authorising the issue of notes in exchange therefor.

While the necessity for the holding by the Indian Government of a considerable stock of gold was thus recognised, it was decided that the financial circumstances of the country precluded the obtainment of this amount by borrowing. The stock was to be built up gradually, by reliance upon the circumstance that in good trade years India's coin demand on Europe would exhaust the amount which could be obtained by the sale of the Secretary of State's Council bills, and that the mints being now closed to the coinage of silver, the surplus must be sent out in gold. What, however, were the Government of India to do with the gold thus obtained? They have to maintain large treasury balances all over the country, and mostly under their direct control, only a relatively small proportion being lodged with the Presidency banks of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. These balances being, however, required to meet ordinary demands, had of necessity to be mainly held in the rupee coinage of the country, and the amount of gold which they could absorb was consequently not very considerable. An answer to the question was afforded by the existence of what is termed the Paper Currency Reserve. The note circulation of India is in the hands of the Government, and any one who pleases

can obtain currency notes, corresponding to the English bank-notes, by deposit of an equivalent amount of rupees, or now of gold. These notes are legal tender, but the Government of India are obliged to redeem them on presentation, and are consequently required by law to maintain in cash a Paper Currency Reserve for this purpose. Allowing for the fact that a considerable proportion of the notes will always remain out, ten crores¹ of the note circulation were permitted to be invested in the rupee securities of the Government of India, but for every note in excess of these ten crores an equivalent amount had to be maintained in cash. At this time the note circulation was about twenty-seven crores, necessitating the maintenance of seventeen crores of actual or potential coin.² The ordinary demand for coin in exchange for notes would be in rupees; but as no demand was likely to be made to the extent of the full seventeen crores possible, there was scope for the holding of a considerable portion of the Currency Reserve in gold, and this was to be the main objective for the gold which would come into India. Gold thus began to come in to a considerable extent in 1898-99, and by January 1900 the full 5 million sterling which the Government of India had estimated as the amount which might safely be held in gold in the Currency Reserve had been obtained. The influx of gold, however, still continued, the prevalence of famine required the outgoing of a large stock of rupees into circulation, and the rupee balance in the Currency

¹ A crore of rupees is two-thirds of one million sterling. The amount has since been raised to twelve, and subsequently to fourteen, crores, the additional four crores being invested in sterling securities.

² Gold and silver bullion can now be kept in the reserve, instead of coin.

Reserve soon became dangerously depleted. Much difficulty was experienced in cashing notes presented, with the result that in at least one part of India sovereigns and currency notes began to fall to an appreciable discount. Efforts were made to put gold into active circulation by paying various demands on Government therein, but this panacea met with little success, and most of the gold thus sent out returned to the Government coffers. The obvious remedy was further rupee coinage, and this was proceeded with to some extent; but it was also clear that public confidence would be shaken, and the progress obtained by the closure of the mints undone, if the coinage were to be added to without guarantees that the additions thus made would not depreciate the exchange value of the rupee.

Such was the situation when Sir Edward Law took charge of the Finance portfolio, and it was an anxious and critical one. He grappled with it in an exhaustive Minute of the 28th June 1900. His first point was that the silver balance in the Currency Reserve must be sufficient to secure the convertibility of the note issue, and consequently that the quantity of gold which this reserve could hold must be limited.

"The existence of gold in the reserve," he said, "although it has been declared legal tender, cannot satisfy the legitimate requirements of the public. . . . Owing to the smallness of the sums representing an enormous proportion of commercial transactions, and the very conservative habits of the people, no one at present requires gold as a circulating medium in India, and consequently the existing stock, so far as currency purposes are concerned, is of no immediate practical value in case of sudden demands for the encashment

of notes. The only way in which it represents suitable security for the paper currency is that it is convertible by sale into silver bullion, from which bullion rupees may be coined. Hence, under existing conditions the gold in the currency reserve can only be considered as an investment, subject to the same conditions as the ten crores held in Government securities; and in permitting the present large gold investment the limit of safety has been passed and serious difficulties have been encountered, whilst we are far from having acquired the stock of gold requisite for exchange purposes. . . . Pending an increase in the note circulation . . . or some other change in existing conditions, I am of opinion that a maximum sum of approximately £7,000,000 in gold may now be safely held in the currency reserve."

His next proposition was that if gold accumulated above this limit of safety the excess must be mainly devoted to the purchase and coinage of silver, since, as above observed, the expedient of putting gold into active circulation had largely failed.

Thirdly, to meet the apprehension that such coinage would break down the currency policy, by reducing the stock of gold and expanding the amount of rupees in circulation, Sir Edward proposed to devote the entire profits on rupee coinage to the building up of a special Gold Standard Fund, which is now known as the Gold Standard Reserve.

"The recorded opinion of the Currency Commission (Committee)," he wrote, "is unanimous as regards the necessity of a certain gold reserve being held for exchange purposes. . . . If it be accepted that £7,000,000 is the maximum sum which, under existing conditions,

can be held in the gold currency reserve, in addition to the ten crores already invested, it is evident that such assistance as can be obtained from manipulating the reserve will fail to provide the sum in gold which it is considered advisable to hold in connection with the maintenance of steady exchange. So far, no authority has ventured to name a definite sum which should suffice for this purpose, but there is a general consensus of opinion, in which I fully concur, that a very considerable sum is required. The most ready way of obtaining such a large sum is by gold borrowings, but the opinion of the Currency Commission was strongly hostile to such a course, and the question therefore remains unanswered—How is the necessary stock of gold to be obtained? . . . I propose to create a special ‘Gold Exchange Fund’ independent of, but in case of *extraordinary* requirements for exchange purposes to be used in conjunction with, the gold resources of the currency reserve.”

These three propositions were accepted, and they have since formed the bed-rock of the currency policy of the Government of India. Certain subsidiary proposals, under which the interest on the ten crores of paper currency investment was to be handed over to the Gold Standard Reserve, and a portion of the gold belonging to the Currency Reserve was to be held in British consols, were not adopted, but these did not affect the integral features of Sir Edward’s scheme. Under the results of that scheme, rupees, though they are still legal tender to an unlimited extent, have become practically a token coin, like the 5-franc piece of the Latin Union, the value of which is independent of the bullion value of the constituent silver. Additions

to the rupee coinage are made, not at the arbitrary discretion of Government, but when it is shown by the increase of the gold stock in India that they are required for trade purposes. The danger of putting into circulation a large quantity of coin, the artificial value of which is largely in excess of its bullion value, is met by the addition of such difference, represented by the profits on rupee coinage, to the Gold Standard Reserve, which is for the most part invested in sterling securities, and this increases automatically by the interest accruing. Consequently, if and when the tide turns, if exchange falls and the quantity of rupees in circulation becomes redundant instead of insufficient, the Gold Standard Reserve affords, as will presently be explained, a ready means of tiding over this emergency.

Since the original scheme was launched some further developments have been made therein. In order to obviate the sending to India of quantities of gold which the Government of India could not absorb, and which had therefore to be sent to England to procure silver to coin into rupees, the Secretary of State now complies with trade demands by issuing Council bills in excess of what he needs for revenue purposes, and from the excess quantity of gold that he thus obtains fresh silver is purchased for coinage. The Secretary of State also keeps a considerable proportion of the gold held in the Currency Reserve under his own custody in London, and is thus able to utilise this gold more promptly when occasion requires its conversion into rupees. Finally, considerable embarrassment has from time to time been caused to the Government of India by the fact that while the importation of gold into the country, or the Secre-

tary of State's Council drawings which are often by telegram, necessitated the immediate depletion of their rupee balances, these could not be replenished for several weeks, owing to the necessity of purchasing silver in England and getting it sent out to be coined in India. This difficulty was first met by the holding within the Currency Reserve of a certain amount of silver bullion, which could be coined at once when occasion required. Later on, it was found that this was not a sufficient safeguard, and consequently the bullion reserve was taken out of the Currency Reserve, increased to 6 crores of rupees (4 million sterling), and held as a portion of the Gold Standard Reserve.¹ Sir Edward Law opposed this last step, which was taken after his retirement, as tampering with the original objects for which the Gold Standard Reserve was constituted, and his misgivings found a wide echo in India. On the other side, it was held that the step taken proved to be of great use in tiding over the interval which had to elapse between the orders of silver for fresh coinage and its actual conversion into rupees.

The success of Sir Edward's Gold Standard Reserve policy was magnificently demonstrated in 1907-8. In that year, after a series of prosperous seasons and large additions to the rupee coinage, the tide suddenly turned, owing to a fall in Indian exports, and the appreciation of gold consequent on a commercial crisis in America and tight money all over the world. Exchange suddenly fell, and the previous demand for rupees was converted into a demand for gold. The gold balances held by the Government of India in their treasuries and in the Cur-

¹ The silver portion of the Gold Standard Reserve is now held in rupees.

rency Reserve were speedily exhausted, and then the Gold Standard Reserve came into play. The Secretary of State stopped his Council drawings, and the normal position was reversed, the Government of India upholding exchange by offering bills on the Secretary of State at 1s. 4d. a rupee less a fraction which would have been the cost of remitting gold from India. The stock of rupees in circulation was thus reduced, indirectly by the cessation of the outgoings from the Government of India treasuries which would have taken place had the Secretary of State's normal drawings continued, and directly by the absorption of the rupees tendered to the Government of India for the bills issued by them on London. In order that the Secretary of State might meet the liabilities thus thrown upon him and provide for his revenue requirements, it was of course necessary to sell the Gold Standard Reserve securities to a large extent, and whereas in October 1907 the total amount of sterling assets held by or on behalf of the Government of India had amounted to 24½ million sterling, this had been reduced to 9½ million by April 1909. The object for which the Gold Standard Reserve was instituted had, however, been attained; the fall in exchange had been stayed; from that time onward matters began to improve; and the sterling holdings of the Government of India have now exceeded their former level. Had Sir Edward Law done nothing else of note during his term of office in India, his Gold Standard Reserve policy would by itself have made his tenure of office noteworthy.

One point remains to be noticed. It was not intended that the profits on coinage should be indefinitely added to the Gold Standard Reserve. Once that had

reached a strong enough position, these might be otherwise applied. Sir Edward Law was inclined, before he left India, to think that it would be necessary to bring the Gold Standard Reserve up to 20 million sterling before any steps were taken in this direction. In 1907, however, although the Gold Standard Reserve was still several millions short of this figure, the Secretary of State thought that it was sufficiently strong to enable half the profits on coinage to be diverted to the purposes of railway construction. Shortly after this decision was arrived at, however, the financial crisis above referred to took place, with the result of stopping for a time further accretions to the rupee coinage, and the Secretary of State has now decided that there shall be no diversion of profits on such coinage from the Gold Standard Reserve Fund until the total sterling assets held by the Government of India in that Fund and in its Currency Reserve taken together exceeds 25 million.

It has been observed above that the Fowler Currency Committee looked forward to the coinage of gold at the Indian mints. This policy was accepted in principle, but technical difficulties arose with the Royal Mint in London in connection with the coinage of sovereigns and half-sovereigns in India, and the proposal to coin these there was finally dropped. It was also decided that it would not be advisable to start an Indian coinage of small gold pieces representing 3, 5, or 10 rupees. Currency notes are already issued by the Government of India for Rs. 5 and Rs. 10, and it was thought that there would be no real scope for small gold coins which would be expensive to produce and easily lost.

It has been noted that the attempts to promote the active circulation of British gold coins in India in 1899-

1900 were unsuccessful. Since then, however, there has been a steadily increasing demand for sovereigns, and it may be hoped that eventually these will become a medium of active circulation to a much greater extent than at present, with the result that the Indian Currency system will be placed on a still more secure basis.

It has already been mentioned that the note circulation in India is in the hands of Government. Prior to Sir Edward Law's time, however, the Government currency notes issued were not legal tender, or cashable by Government, throughout the whole country. India was divided for note purposes into various circles, with headquarters, respectively, at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Rangoon, Lahore, and Allahabad (subsequently changed to Cawnpore), and the notes issued from each of these centres were legal tender within that circle only, and consequently circulated at a discount outside the circle boundaries. This procedure was necessitated by the fact that a system of universal notes, cashable anywhere, would have inflicted too great a strain on the Government balances, since the notes would be largely used for the purpose of trade remittances, and would thus come to the nearest Government centre for encashment. On the other hand, if the facilities for encashment could be increased, the note circulation would rise, and the proportion of notes presented for encashment would decrease, with the result that there would be less strain on the Government currency balances. Sir Edward Law accordingly initiated a scheme under which notes of the lowest denomination (Rs. 5) were to become universal legal tender in all parts of India, excluding Burma, and this proposal was sanctioned by the Secre-

tary of State and became law in 1903. Later on, the universalisation of the Re. 5 note was extended to Burma also, and the recently passed Paper Currency Act of 1910 carries out a further idea of Sir Edward Law's for the universalisation of Re. 10 note, and also universalises the currency notes for Rs. 50.

The effect of the universalisation of the Re. 5 note was to cause a large increase in the circulation of notes of this value, and as the remaining note circulation had also expanded with the growth of trade, the opportunity was taken in 1904-5 to increase the invested portion of the Paper Currency Reserve from ten to twelve¹ crores, the additional two crores being invested in British consols, thus strengthening the Gold Reserve position of the Government of India.

Connected with the Paper Currency system is the idea of establishing a great Central Bank for India, with a position similar to that of the Bank of England or the Bank of France. India possesses Presidency banks at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, each of which has a certain connection with Government, and receives the deposit of a portion of the Government balances. Their powers, however, were limited, and their transactions restricted to India and Ceylon, so that they could not take any part in promoting the desired flow of capital from Great Britain to India. They, moreover, exercised no effective influence over the money market, and so far from their being able to render assistance to the Government at seasons of financial stringency, the Government had occasionally to lend them money. The idea of a Central Bank for India initiated with the discussions of the Fowler Currency Committee, and in

¹ Increased to 14 crores in 1911.

dealing with the report of that Committee in 1899, the Government of India addressed the Secretary of State in the following terms :—

“ There can, we think, be no question that, for the purpose of the effective maintenance of the gold standard, a bank with a large sterling capital, and constituted on the model of the Bank of England or Bank of France, would be a very powerful support to the State. Such a Bank would be better able to measure and deal with the requirements of trade for foreign remittances than any Government, and it would have the capacity, which a Government Department cannot be expected to possess, of preventing unnecessary export of gold without hampering trade. An institution of the kind would also be most effective in promoting the circulation of gold. It would again be an effective agent for securing an increased circulation of fiduciary money; and we might find it possible to entrust it with the management of the Government Paper Currency.”

Proposals for the creation of such a Central Bank were laid before the Secretary of State in January 1900, but in consequence of various objections indicated by him, the decision of the question was postponed pending Sir Edward Law's arrival in India. Sir Edward dealt with the matter in a minute which was forwarded to the Secretary of State in 1901. He was against the proposal in present circumstances, and observed that “ whilst convinced that it is unnecessary to establish a Central Bank for the assistance of trade, and unprofitable, as regards provision of assistance in connection with possible exchange difficulties, I am still of opinion that if practical difficulties could be overcome, it would be distinctly advisable to establish such a bank so as to relieve

Government of present heavy responsibilities and to secure the advantages arising from the control of the banking system of a country by a solid, powerful, central institution. In India, Government is to-day the chief banker. I do not think it well that Government should occupy such a position; and I am only deterred by what appear to me to be the very great practical difficulties of the situation." This minute convinced both the Government of India and the Secretary of State that the idea of a Central Bank was under existing circumstances premature, and the proposal to establish one has not since been revived.

Sir Edward was, however, of opinion that it was desirable to give the Presidency banks, under certain conditions, facilities for borrowing in sterling in London, but the proposals made to the Secretary of State in this connection were strongly opposed by the rival exchange banks and eventually fell through.

One final aspect of Sir Edward Law's work in connection with Currency Reform needs mention. A number of the Native States of India possessed their own mints and had their independent coinage, which was, however, modelled on the British rupee. Prior to the closure of the mints, these native rupees, being of the same bullion value as the British rupee, exchanged with it on equal terms; but the effect of the policy which gave the British rupee an enhanced artificial value was to depreciate the Native State rupee in exchange therewith, and to subject the Native States and their populations to currency troubles of much the same character as British India had previously experienced in its dealings with the outside world. As a remedy, the States which were willing to adopt this course were encouraged to close

their mints and accept the British rupee, a liberal allowance being made for the old State coins handed in. During Sir Edward Law's tenure of office arrangements of this character were made with the important States of Baroda, Jeypore, and Indore, and with several minor native chiefs.

One of the most responsible and difficult parts of the Finance Member's duties is in connection with Railway finance. The Government of India own most of the railways in the country, and work a certain number of these, leasing out others to companies. In other cases, again, where companies own their own lines, their capital has been raised with the assistance of Government, or on the Secretary of State's guarantee. The financing of this large railway property of the Government—the total mileage of railways in India amounted to nearly 25,000 miles when Sir Edward Law took office, and now exceeds 32,000—is intimately connected with the general finances of the country. The current expenditure, in so far as it falls directly upon Government, is met from the earnings of the railways, but the amounts required for the improvement or extension of railway systems are treated as capital expenditure, and are mainly financed (*a*) by borrowing in England or India, and (*b*) by the allotment of funds from current revenues or cash balances, or from moneys under the control of the Government such as deposits in Post Office Savings Banks. The provision of funds under (*b*) depends of course largely on the financial conditions of each year, while the facilities for railway borrowing are limited, not merely by financial conditions and the possibility of the Government having to raise money by loan for other purposes, but

by the fact that the market for Indian securities both in London and in India is a limited one. For some years previous to Sir Edward Law's assumption of office, for one cause and another, the amount of money provided for capital expenditure on open lines of railway was very limited. Demands came from all parts of India for new lines, and these demands were emphasised by great distress during periods of famine on account of the absence of railway communication. New lines again, when constructed, acted as feeders to the old, and the increasing traffic which the latter had to deal with required more rolling stock, larger stations and goods sheds, additional sidings and stations, and sometimes the duplication of tracks. The growing prosperity of the country also demanded a quicker and better service of trains, which involved the provision of more efficient means for securing the safety of passengers.

In short, in responding to the demands for new lines the old lines were starved of funds, and the difficulty of conducting the business of the older railways was becoming acute.

It was at this stage that Sir Edward Law became Finance Minister. He was quick to recognise that the claims of the Railway Department to a larger allotment of funds, and primarily for the open lines, must be met if development was not to be retarded.

The difficulties arising out of an unstable exchange had been overcome by the closure of the mints. The railways, for the most part, had passed through the period when they were a drain on the general revenues of India, and were now earning enough to cover all interest charges and leave a balance to the credit of the

Government. The trade of the country was progressing rapidly and the financial position of the Government generally was strong.

Sir Edward Law was therefore able to give unqualified support to proposals for an increase in the amount of capital to be provided for railway purposes; for though larger sums were provided than formerly they were not sufficient to meet the demands of existing railways and at the same time allow of new lines being undertaken freely.

The difficulties which have to be overcome to permit of a definite and continuous policy of railway development were fully recognised by Sir Edward Law, and are clearly indicated in the following extract from a note recorded by him on the subject in 1903:—

“ I will endeavour to deal with the points summarised by Secretary in Paragraph 2 of his Note :—

“(1) I fully agree that Government financing by means of direct borrowing is the cheapest system.

“(2) I agree with the objections noted against this system—viz., (a) That it leads to violent fluctuations resulting from the vicissitudes of the State finances consequent on our dependence on meteorological conditions; (b) That the Public Works Department must remain uncertain as to the amount of capital that will be available in any particular year or series of years; and therefore (c) that it makes a comprehensive economical programme impossible.

“ To these objections I would add one, which appears to me stronger than even any of the above. That is, that dependence on Government financing by direct borrowing has already proved a failure from the point

of view of the practical impossibility, under present conditions, of raising the capital necessary to carry out an adequate programme of railway construction. It is, perhaps, desirable to examine in detail this question of the inadequacy of our present arrangements for obtaining the desirable amount of capital for railway construction. Such capital can only be obtained by rupee loans in India, by sterling loans in England, or by drawing on surplus treasury balances. The amount that can be raised by rupee loans is strictly limited, and I would venture to refer to my remarks on the question in my note on the Famine Insurance Fund proposal, dated April 26, 1903. In that note I endeavoured to show that, even in favourable seasons, we cannot with equanimity contemplate the necessity for borrowing more than an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ crores *per annum* as a maximum in India, whilst $2\frac{1}{4}$ crores would seem a much more reasonable figure.

“As regards borrowing in sterling our resources are limited by the objections of the Secretary of State to any rapid increase of our sterling liabilities, and also by the fact that sterling loans can only be raised within limits sanctioned by the British Parliament. The first objection is one in which the Secretary of State is strongly supported by the recommendations of the Currency Committee, and I may add that I am personally in full accord with the opinion expressed by the Committee on this particular question. Moreover, apart from the particular objections indicated by the Committee, I am of opinion that any attempt to materially increase our borrowings on the London market would inevitably result in a more or less serious depreciation of Indian securities. The bugbear of the uncer-

tainty of Indian exchange weighs heavily on the minds of the majority of the investing public in England, and whilst any amount of capital is forthcoming for railways in Argentina or Mexico, where the exchange question is in reality much more serious than in India, our past difficulties have been so carefully and widely advertised that nearly every one looks askance at Indian investments. The market is in the main limited to investments by a small section of the public who never sacrificed their property during the difficult years at the beginning of the last decade, and who, having had their confidence justified, are now ready to increase their investments, and to those who have acquired special knowledge of Indian conditions through residence in India or other exceptional circumstances.

“The rates of interest obtainable on Indian securities are not sufficiently high to attract speculative investors, whilst the resources of the classes who ordinarily invest are very limited. It is difficult to say what sum the latter class are prepared to take up as an annual average; but if in any given year our issue should exceed the amount which they are so prepared to take up by even 20 per cent, the fall in our securities would be most serious, and it would, moreover, have the result of frightening our permanent customers so that they would be less ready to invest in immediately succeeding years, and, therefore, although we might by a certain sacrifice obtain an additional 3 or 4 million sterling in any particular year, the result on our credit would be such that our difficulties would be greater than ever in immediately succeeding years. It must be borne in mind that every additional million put on the market beyond what it is normally prepared to absorb

must mean the depreciation of our securities by figures representing geometrical progression.

“I have dealt with the possibility of finding our requirements by loans: there remains for consideration the only other resource, namely, that of drawing on our Treasury Balances. These, in the last three years, have been drawn upon to the extent of 5 million sterling, or $7\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees, and approximately 18 per cent of our total expenditure on railways has been found from Treasury Balances in India. Now, the existence of these Treasury Balances depends upon the surplus of revenue over expenditure. Such surpluses have in the last four years been abnormally large, but Government has recently taken measures for their reduction, so that in future the possibility of drawing on this source for capital expenditure will be reduced to something very small, if it does not entirely disappear.”

The failure to keep pace with the increasing demands made upon Government in connection with railways was further considered in some quarters to be due not merely to difficulty in providing funds, but to the system under which they were controlled, namely, by a Secretariat in the Government of India, under a Member of Council who was not an expert railway officer; but before making any changes it was considered expedient to obtain a railway expert from England to advise the Government of India as to the means to be adopted to place railways on a more commercial basis. Mr Thomas Robertson, C.V.O., who was engaged for this purpose by the Secretary of State, visited India in the winters of 1901 and 1902, and submitted his report in 1903.

The immediate outcome of this report was the creation—which will be referred to more fully later on,—of the Department of Commerce and Industry, to which all business relating to trade and commerce was transferred; and the appointment of a Railway Board, which was to consist of a President and two members, and to administer, under the Commerce Department, the entire railway system of India.

In regard to the financing of railways Mr Robertson recommended the creation of a Railway Fund, distinct from the general finances of the Government of India; but the Secretary of State and the Government of India were unable to accept this suggestion, as they held that “in the last resort all liabilities incurred are Government liabilities. Government must, therefore, retain control over them, and cannot afford to let other persons pledge their credit without their knowledge, or to an extent of which they are unaware.”

Mr Robertson's report was therefore barren of results so far as improvement in the method of providing funds for railways was concerned. The amount provided for railways when Sir Edward Law assumed office was, roughly, 7 millions, and by the time he vacated office it had risen to 8 millions; but Sir Edward considered this amount quite inadequate for the needs of the country. At the same time he recognised, as is shown by the Note quoted above, that there was a limit to the amount Government might borrow. Unless, therefore, the opening up of large tracts of country which were entirely devoid of railway communication was to be indefinitely deferred, it was necessary that some other means than direct borrowing by Government should be found for raising the money required for railways.

Holding the view that the investing public in England would be more interested in Indian railways if these ceased to be State properties and became ordinary commercial securities, Sir Edward, just before vacating office, proposed that the Government should buy up the railway lines of which it was not already the sole owner, re-group all the lines into suitable systems, create companies to take over and work these systems in thirty-year leases, and raise additional capital therefor by the issue of debentures on the security of the several railways thus created. The Government interest in these lines was to be secured by paid-up shares and debentures equivalent to their existing value, and as the Government required fresh money for the purpose of railway purchase, it was to realise it by the sale of a portion of its existing interests. The Government was to retain special control over lines which were peculiarly important for strategic or famine purposes, but in respect to the rest, its interest was to be proportioned to its share of the capital. Although the Government of India and the Secretary of State expressed themselves unable to accept this scheme, some attempts have since been made in the directions indicated by Sir Edward.

When the Madras Railway and the Southern Maharashtra Railway contracts fell in at the end of 1907, the former railway was divided up between the latter and the South Indian Railway, so that each should have a definite area to operate in. Again, when the South Indian Railway contract was approaching its termination at the end of 1910, an effort was made to reconstitute the Company on an unguaranteed basis. So far as the negotiations between the Government and

the Company were concerned, the terms were agreed to, but it was found that they were not acceptable to the money market and the Secretary of State could not see his way to improve them. The effort to place the railway on a more truly commercial basis was consequently unsuccessful.

Though Sir Edward Law did not have the satisfaction during his tenure of office of witnessing the fruit borne by his labours for the improvement of railway finance, the representations made to the Secretary of State at his instance subsequently resulted in the appointment in May 1907 of a Committee to consider the whole question. This Committee, which was presided over by Sir James Mackay, G.C.M.G., &c., now Lord Inchcape, reported that there was no limit to the amount which could be spent profitably on railways in India, and that Government should be able to raise enough money to provide at least £12,500,000 annually without prejudicing Indian securities generally. While the condition of the money market has not yet permitted of this figure being reached, the amount actually allotted for railways has, however, now reached about £10,000,000, whereas it was under £7,000,000 when Sir Edward Law assumed office.

The irrigation works of India are also mainly owned by the State, and the expansion and construction of large irrigation systems has to be undertaken by the Government of India. Works which, though not in themselves remunerative, are valuable as protectives against famine, are constructed out of current revenues. Productive works, *i.e.*, those which are calculated to yield a return which will more than cover working expenses and the interest on capital, are fin-

anced by borrowing, and money requirements in this direction are considered along with the railway programme above referred to. In 1899-1900, the ordinary allotment for productive works was 85 lakhs a-year. In Sir Edward Law's time this was raised to 100, and later to 125 lakhs, while a further development, with which he would have been in complete sympathy, has since taken place, and the amount annually raised for productive irrigation purposes has been increased to 1 million sterling (150 lakhs), and subsequently to £1,133,000. Sir Edward's knowledge of the great irrigation systems of Northern Italy was of special value to him in dealing with similar projects in India.

As above stated, the Finance Department had in Sir Edward Law's time to deal with matters affecting trade and customs, and in these Sir Edward naturally took a very special interest. The customs revenue goes entirely to the Government of India, but the local Governments are responsible for the general arrangements for the collection of customs revenue at the various ports. Sir Edward was much struck by the diversities of procedure which resulted from this system, and during his term of office steps were taken to make procedure more uniform and simple. The main difficulty was, however, in connection with the superior *personnel*. The Collectors of Customs at the principal ports were members of the Indian Civil Service, having, as a rule, also other duties to discharge, and being constantly liable to reversion to work of a different character in their own Province. The result was that the Customs Collectors did not stay long enough at their posts to acquire an adequate knowledge of the technical matters with which they had to

deal, while their principal assistants, for the most part promoted subordinates, were not of the calibre required for the important duties they had to discharge. These facts gave rise to legitimate discontent on the part of the commercial community, and during Sir Edward's tenure of office a scheme was elaborated, and sanctioned by the Secretary of State shortly after he retired, for an Imperial Customs Service, consisting of members of the Indian Civil Service and other officers recruited specially from England. The members of this service were to discharge the higher duties in the Customs Department, and were to be appointed and promoted by the Government of India, and liable to transfer from one port to another, so that the customs work would no longer be done in separate Provincial compartments. These arrangements, which have now been in force for some years, have materially improved the working of the customs administration.

Sir Edward had to deal during his term of office with various tariff questions which have a material bearing on the subject of Tariff Reform. India is a Free Trade country. There are light duties on imports, which do not as a rule exceed 5 per cent *ad valorem*,¹ but these are imposed purely for revenue purposes, and not with any protective object, while in the case of cotton imports the duty levied is counterbalanced by an equivalent local excise. It is thus difficult for India to take retaliatory measures in respect of an outside country whose trade regulations give undue favour to the export of its goods to India or impose a harmful duty on imports from there, and this difficulty is of

¹ There are higher duties on special articles such as liquors, salt, silver, petroleum, and tobacco.

course intensified by the fact that the Government of India are not free agents in respect of their financial policy, but have to comply with the instructions of the Secretary of State.

The first important problem of this character with which Sir Edward had to deal was in respect of sugar. Beet sugar from foreign countries began to flood the Indian market from 1897, when it was excluded from the United States by countervailing duties; and as bounties were given by the exporting countries in respect of this sugar, it competed unfairly with the home-grown article, and especially with the products of the Indian refineries. In 1899, shortly after Lord Curzon took office, the Government of India obtained power to impose special countervailing duties on bounty-fed sugar up to the extent to which bounties were given in respect thereof. This measure, however, did not prove of great effect, since it was found that the recognised bounties given by foreign countries were not the only means by which the export of sugar to India was stimulated. In Germany and Austria, for instance, whence the bulk of this sugar came, local protective duties of a high character enabled sugar producers and refiners to control the home trade by means of combinations or "cartels," and to reap so much profit thereby that they were able to dispose of their excess products abroad at artificially cheap rates. The countervailing duties imposed by India were, however, one of the factors which led to the question of bounties being fully considered by the foreign countries principally concerned at the Brussels Conference of 1902, at which it was decided to abolish sugar bounties, and to this decision most of the bounty-giving countries adhered.

India was not a party to this conference, but her action was practically in accordance with its decisions. The abolition of bounties was to take effect from September 1903, and in 1902 the Government of India took power to countervail the artificial encouragement given to sugar by the "cartels" system up to that date, while in 1903 they extended these special duties so as to cover sugar produced before September 1903 but subsequently imported. They also retained power to impose fresh duties in the event of a repetition of the circumstances which had led them to take action originally. These measures, in which Sir Edward Law's technical knowledge, and appreciation of foreign tariff and economical conditions, were very valuable, and which he keenly pressed in the interests of Indian agriculture, proved quite successful as regards the sugar at which they aimed; but the result has been to enhance the imports of cane sugar, which comes mostly from Mauritius and Java. These imports, however, are not artificially stimulated by the producing countries, and while the present Free Trade policy lasts, the Indian sugar producer has therefore no ground of complaint in respect thereto.

Another interesting question arose in connection with coffee. The French Government, having had tariff disputes with Brazil, imposed a large additional duty on imported coffee, which came mainly from Brazilian markets; but this incidentally affected the coffee-growers of Southern India, for they also exported to France to a considerable extent. Brazil subsequently came to terms with France, and obtained favourable rates for its coffee, but the French Government proposed to maintain the former heavy duties as against India as a means of

obtaining special concessions for French goods there. The Government of India refused to make any special discrimination in favour of France or to make general tariff reductions which would have materially diminished their revenue. The course they took, on Sir Edward Law's advice, was to propose the levy of enhanced duties on brandies and other articles of luxury, which, while they would be of general application in accordance with the Indian financial system, would work to the special detriment of the French producer. This threat proved effective, and a satisfactory arrangement was come to with the French Republic, under which Indian coffee and other produce obtained the benefits of the French minimum tariff, in return for a reduction of Indian duties on copperas and vinegar—a measure which involved but a slight loss to the Indian revenues.

Trouble was likewise threatened with Japan, owing to the fact that India had not been a party to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1894, which secured the “most favoured nation” treatment of British imports by the Japanese Government. That Government, in consequence of tariff arrangements with Germany, began to discriminate against Indian saltpetre and indigo, and demanded as a *quid pro quo* for a change, a large reduction of duty on the principal Japanese exports to India. In accordance with their general Free Trade policy, the Indian Government could not comply with this demand, for the articles in question were also exported by other countries, and a general tariff reduction would have involved a large loss of revenue. On the other hand, it was difficult to make any special reprisals against Japan, for India's exports to that country far exceeded the imports from there, and a

tariff war would consequently have been to India's disadvantage. Finally, however, a satisfactory arrangement with Japan on the "most favoured nation" basis was arrived at.

The Government of India had thus had some special experience of tariff difficulties when Mr Chamberlain's advocacy of the policy of Tariff Reform in the United Kingdom led to their being invited by the Secretary of State in 1903 to state their views upon the system of preferential tariffs between the various parts of the Empire; and Sir Edward's special knowledge of tariff conditions proved of the greatest value to them in framing their reply to the Secretary of State, which was accompanied by a full and very able minute by Sir Edward himself. This matter will, however, be treated by another writer in connection with Sir Edward's attitude on the question of Tariff Reform. It will suffice here to say that while Sir Edward did not actually dissent from the general conclusions of the Government of India's despatch, his intimate personal acquaintance with the subject enabled him to point out, in a masterly analysis, that the danger of retaliatory action by foreign countries, which his colleagues viewed with great apprehension, was one which might easily be exaggerated, since the goods these obtained from India consisted largely of articles, such as jute, in which India enjoyed a practical monopoly, or of raw material, which it would not be for their interest to tax.

Another matter which engaged Sir Edward's attention, and in which he was specially competent to advise by reason of his acquaintance with that country, was India's trade relations with Persia, and the necessity for developing trade which the Russian Government

were endeavouring to monopolise. In 1904 a special commercial mission was despatched, in concert with the Indian Tea Association and Indian Chambers of Commerce, to examine the trade possibilities in Eastern and Southern Persia, and the report of this mission has proved of much value to Indian traders interested in that market.

The Indian Tea Association were also interested in pushing the export of Indian tea to other countries and its consumption in India itself. This was a matter in which they had Sir Edward's warm sympathy; and, in 1903, an Act was passed providing for the levy of a small cess on Indian tea exported by sea, the proceeds of which are handed to the Tea Association for the purpose of promoting sales. A special grant was also given by the Indian Government for scientific investigation and research into the methods of tea cultivation and manufacture.

In dealing with trade questions, the Finance Department of the Government of India was hampered by the inadequate character of the machinery at its disposal. Its chief local agent in these matters was an officer of the Department, styled the Director-General of Statistics, who framed an annual review of the trade of India, was consulted in matters relating to the amendment of the tariff, and had consequently to maintain relations with the commercial world. He had, however, other functions, and the defects of the existing system are clearly summarised in a letter issued by the Government of India to the Indian Chambers of Commerce in May 1902, in which they stated that they were "impressed by the defective nature of the arrangements for providing the Government with advice and information

upon commercial and industrial questions in which the State is concerned. Still more noticeable is the almost entire absence of any machinery by which Government can systematically procure and communicate to the commercial public information on matters which are of interest to them."

It was accordingly proposed to establish a special Bureau of Commercial Intelligence, under a Director-General, which was to collect and publish all information likely to be of use to the commercial public, or to the Government in its relations to commerce. This proposal did not, however, meet with full acceptance by the Secretary of State, and later on it became merged in the larger scheme already mentioned (p. 285), which was initiated by Lord Curzon, and in regard to which he received the warm support of Sir Edward Law. This was the establishment of a Commerce and Industry Department of the Government of India, under a separate Member of Council, which should deal with all matters connected with trade and customs, and have under it the Geological Survey, Postal and Telegraph Departments, and the Railway Administration, being assisted as regards railways by the creation of a Railway Board. It was also to possess a Director-General of Commercial Intelligence, who would discharge functions of much the same character as had been originally proposed for the Commercial Intelligence Bureau. This scheme was sanctioned by the Secretary of State, and came into effect in March 1905, shortly after Sir Edward had left India. Like the Railway Board, the Commerce and Industry Department has as yet perhaps not done all that was expected from it. It has been handicapped by rapid changes in the directing *personnel*. The first Member of

Council for Commerce and Industry (Sir J. Hewett) became a Lieutenant-Governor within two years of his appointment ; the second (Mr Finlay), who had been formerly Secretary in the Finance Department under Sir Edward Law, had to resign office owing to ill-health after he had held it for only a year ; and the third (the late Mr Harvey) died two years later. The present writer has always thought that it would have been of enormous benefit to India had the Commerce and Industry Department been in existence when Sir Edward Law joined the Governor-General's Council, and had he been allotted that portfolio. The purely financial problems with which he dealt so well might in course of time have been grappled with by others, but no one had his special acquaintance with commercial questions, while his intense interest in the economic development of India, the cordial relations he always maintained with Chambers of Commerce and other organs of non-official mercantile opinion, and the esteem and confidence in which he was held by them, would have enabled him in this position, and with the special machinery placed at the disposal of the Commerce and Industry Department, to render India even greater services than those which she actually received from him.

I now turn to the main work of Sir Edward Law in the Finance Department proper, as disclosed in the successive budgets which he framed as Chancellor of the Exchequer for India. During the years preceding Sir Edward's assumption of office, the finances of India had, generally speaking, not been in a satisfactory condition. The Government were hard hit by the exchange difficulties already described, while in 1896-97,

and again in 1899-1900, there were widespread famines which cost millions to the Exchequer in the shape of direct relief and loss of revenue. There has, moreover, been a serious visitation of plague since 1896-97, while in 1897-98 extensive military operations were necessary on the North-West Frontier which cost over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million sterling. The year 1896-97 showed a deficit of £1,136,000, which increased to £3,573,000 in 1897-98. In 1898-99, however, the tide began to turn. The exchange difficulties were getting solved, and in spite of famine the country had entered on an era of prosperity which was reflected in increased receipts under customs and excise. The opium receipts, always a fluctuating factor, also took a turn for the better; while railways, which had hitherto been a source of considerable loss to the State, began to show a gradually increasing surplus. Between 1899 and 1903 the Government of India also reaped a large temporary benefit from the employment of troops belonging to the Indian establishment in South Africa and China, since while so employed their cost was paid by the Home Government. The year 1898-99 closed with a total surplus of £2,640,000, and the year 1899-1900 produced a surplus of $2\frac{3}{4}$ million sterling, while in 1900-1, the first year during which Sir Edward Law held office, though the budget estimates had been framed by his predecessor Sir Clinton Dawkins, the surplus was £1,670,000. This era of prosperity continued throughout Sir Edward Law's term of office, and enabled him to show large surpluses in each year notwithstanding considerable increases in expenditure desirable for the development and defence of the country, liberal grants to the Provincial Governments, and finally, remissions

of taxation. That so much was accomplished was due not merely to favourable circumstances, which financiers often fail to turn to good account, but to Sir Edward Law's able utilisation of these, to his close watch over the finances of the country, and to his strenuous check on unnecessary expenditure. It was characteristic of the man, too, that he was most cautious in using his surpluses, and that for the first few years, and until the financial position was absolutely secure, he deliberately refrained from any reduction of taxation or other permanent sacrifice of revenue. At the outset he provided out of his abundance by temporary non-recurring grants to the Provincial Governments. It was not until he was absolutely certain of the soundness of the financial position that he embarked on more permanent measures of assistance, and on relief to the taxpayers generally. Sir Edward would certainly not have approved of the further reduction of the salt tax made during the term of office of his successor, and sometime secretary (Sir Edward Baker), at a time when the Home Government had practically doomed the Indian opium trade to gradual extinction, and on the eve of unfavourable trade conditions which lowered the customs and railway receipts and converted the surplus into a deficit, thus imposing upon the present Finance Member, Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, the unpopular necessity of raising fresh taxes later on. Equally characteristic of Sir Edward's caution in financial matters was the fact that he preferred to under-estimate rather than to over-estimate his revenues, thus providing a hidden reserve in the event of a failure of rains, depression of trade, or any other of the various circumstances which are apt to upset the most careful

calculations of Indian financiers. With these general remarks, we may pass on to a brief review of each of Sir Edward Law's budgets. Before doing this, however, it may be noted that Sir Edward was instrumental in introducing a simplification of certain of the Indian accounts. The Government of India have many transactions outside their ordinary current receipts and expenditure. They have, as above explained, to raise large sums for capital expenditure on railways and irrigation. They lend money to cultivators and local bodies in large measure, for agricultural purposes and objects of local improvement, and they conduct a large savings bank business through the Postal Department. Sir Edward Law made the accounts in question more clear and intelligible by dividing his budget statistical summaries into two distinct abstracts, one of which dealt with the current revenue and expenditure of the year, ending with the resultant surplus or deficit, and the other with "ways and means," including capital transactions and leading up to the closing cash balance. He also brought under one head all items of capital expenditure under railways and irrigation, which had hitherto been scattered under various entries. A further proposal which he made did not meet with immediate success, but was destined to be carried out later on. This was in connection with the current revenue and expenditure of each year. The Government of India in their capacity of railway proprietors obtain large receipts from the State Railways, but these are very largely counterbalanced by necessary outgoings on account of working expenses. The exhibition of the gross railway receipts under revenue thus gave the idea that the revenues of

India were far greater than they really were, and Sir Edward's desire was to make the position in this respect more clear by including in his revenue estimates only the net receipts from State Railways—*i.e.*, the gross receipts less working charges. The Secretary of State objected to this proposal at the time, but, as observed above, it was carried out by Sir Edward Law's successor.

In framing the budget for 1901-2, Sir Edward estimated for a surplus of £690,000, after providing special grants-in-aid amounting to £1,100,000 to local Governments whose resources had been severely strained by famine and plague, and an additional sum of about £875,000 for military expenditure to carry out improvements which the lessons of the South African War had shown to be necessary. The actual surplus of the year was, however, £4,950,000, owing to increased receipts, chiefly under the head Customs and Railways, and to the military expenditure figures being less than the budget estimate by over one million sterling, in consequence largely of continued absence of troops in South Africa and China.

In the budget for 1902-3, the estimated surplus was taken at £838,000, after providing for large remissions of arrears of land revenue which had accrued during recent famines, the recoverable portion of which was estimated at £738,000, a recurring grant of £267,000 to local Governments for expenditure on education, and special grants amounting to £333,000 to these Governments for special expenditure on public works, on medical requirements, and Provincial administrative purposes. Some small local taxes in the Central Provinces and Ajmere were also done away with or reduced,

and the total cost of these various measures came to more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds sterling. Provision was also made for an additional expenditure of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds sterling on military purposes, as compared with the revised estimate for 1901-2, a large part of this being enabled by the continuance of savings arising from the absence of Indian troops in China and South Africa. In answer to the objection that the financial position warranted some material reduction of taxation, Sir Edward made the following remarks, which are reproduced to show the precarious circumstances under which Indian financiers have to prepare their budgets, and the prudent caution which actuated him in dealing with the future:—

“My answer is that, apart from the vicissitudes attendant on climatic conditions, which so gravely affect our fortunes, and which we must always bear in mind, we must also remember that in some important branches our revenue is by no means assured, whilst it is quite certain that unless we choose to risk checking most desirable moral and material progress our expenditure must increase.

“There are three main heads of revenue—Land, Opium, and Customs, which between them furnish rather more than one-third of our total resources, and, in my opinion, none of these three can with any certainty be reckoned on to increase in proportion to necessarily increasing general expenditure. We have under consideration very important schemes for the reform of the Police, for the improvement and extension of Education in all its branches, including industrial and agricultural, and for sanitary measures, and must have money in hand to permit of these reforms being carried out. Now, not-

withstanding that fresh tracts are continually being brought under cultivation by the extension of irrigation, and that in prosperous districts land assessments gradually advance, the land revenue as a whole is, by the conditions under which it is levied, closely restricted, and any increase must be very slow and gradual. Opium, as I have already pointed out, is a peculiarly precarious source of revenue, and the consequences of political disturbances in China cannot yet be foretold. They will certainly not be to our advantage. Again, our Customs Revenue is—in a direction which we may welcome — threatened by the development of native industries supplying our wants and diminishing our importations, and, in this connection, I may specially point to the rapid increase in the production of Indian petroleum, which may gradually displace the imported article, and the much-to-be-desired development of the sugar and cotton industries of India, which will have the same result, and further, to the possible abolition of the countervailing duties on sugar, as the result of the agreement arrived at by the Brussels Conference.

“ In view of these considerations, it seems to me that we cannot at present afford to be too confident in our anticipations regarding future surpluses. It is not only prudent but necessary to hold our hands, and to refrain from counting with too much certainty on the continuance of that financial prosperity which is a new feature in the situation. I hope, and think, that the new asset which we have realised in our railway profits, and the progress of revenues under such heads as Stamps, Excise, and Post Office will make up for any want of elasticity or falling off under Land, Opium, and Customs ; but twelve months hence, with the experience of another

year to guide us, we shall be in a much safer position than we are to-day to estimate the probability of a continued increase in our revenues."

The actual surplus of the year was £3,070,000, after allowing for further special allotments of £267,000 to local Governments, owing mainly to large increases of revenue over the budget estimates, principally under land revenue, excise, and customs, and to a decrease of £803,000 in expenditure, mainly due to economies in military charges consequent on further prolonged absence of troops outside of India. In meeting the criticism that the large actual surpluses as compared with the budget estimates of recent years showed inaccurate estimating, Sir Edward recorded the following remarks in the budget statement for 1903-4, which again show the prudence with which he dealt with the situation, abstaining from the endeavour to frame forecasts which unexpected circumstances might falsify:—

"Before considering the Estimates for the coming year, I think that I should say something with regard to the large surpluses over and above our Estimates during the last few years. It may be thought that our Estimates should have approximated more closely to results than has been the case, but as regards our Revised Estimate for the past year, it must be remembered that it includes the Berar accounts, which were not included in our original estimate.¹ I, myself, think that we should try to arrive at closer figures, and a serious endeavour has been made in this direction in the preparation of the Estimates for 1903-4. I must, however, point

¹ Berar, which had formerly been separately administered by the Government of India on behalf of the Nizam of Hyderabad, had now been permanently leased to them.

out that an Indian Budget presents very special difficulties as regards accurate estimation. These difficulties arise from the dependence of our revenue on the good or bad fortune of the agricultural industry; this good or bad fortune is entirely dependent on the seasonableness and the amount of rain during the year, and there is no possibility of foretelling how the elements may favour us. Land Revenue, which constitutes nearly one-fourth of our total resources, is naturally directly dependent upon the course of the season, and indirectly the same factor affects returns from Salt, Excise, and Customs. Excise returns are directly influenced by the fortunes of the agriculturist. . . . Customs revenues, too, depending so largely on the importation of cotton goods imported chiefly for the use of the peasantry, are affected by the conditions which make or mar their prosperity.

“ Further, apart from climatic influences, the Customs returns have, for some years past, been affected by the variations in the countervailing duties on sugar, which there was no possibility of estimating beforehand. In addition to fluctuations under the above-mentioned important heads, our opium revenue is, as is well known, a very uncertain factor in our revenue, and further, during the last three years we have had unexpected windfalls through the movements of troops on the Indian Establishment for foreign service, and through payments by the British War Office for stores and material supplied with those troops.

“ I trust that the figures which I am about to present will approximate more closely to results than has been the case with those of the year now drawing to an end, although, as I have shown, our Indian conditions do not

admit of a really close estimation. We are bound to be prudent in our forecasts. If the elements are favourable, a greater or less expansion of revenue exceeding those prudent forecasts will certainly result, whilst, should the season unfortunately prove seriously unfavourable, a shrinkage will result which would completely change the situation if the estimates were less cautiously framed."

In that year (1903-4) the continuing prosperity of the country justified Sir Edward in proposing large remissions of taxation, the first of any importance which had been undertaken since the year 1882. These were a reduction in the salt-tax from Rs. 2/8 to Rs. 2/- per maund of 82 lb., and an extension of exemption from income-tax in respect of incomes of between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 a-year (incomes below Rs. 500 were already exempt), thus relieving a great mass of poor traders, clerks, and minor Government officials on whom the tax weighed very heavily in proportion to their means. The reduction of the salt-tax was a matter which Sir Edward had much at heart, and it was a source of much satisfaction to him that Government could now prudently accomplish this. He hoped, indeed, to effect a further reduction, and, as will presently be seen, his financial policy enabled this to be done in 1905. The income-tax, again, was a branch of fiscal administration in which he was profoundly interested, and his wish was to recast the tax in great measure so as to give it a more elastic and progressive character. His tenure of office was, however, not long enough to enable him to develop his ideas in this direction. The total surrender of revenue involved by the concessions in 1903 was estimated at nearly £1,400,000,

while some further allotments were made to the Provincial Governments. The year was, notwithstanding, estimated to close with a surplus of £949,000, which rose in actual fact to £2,996,000 (owing to the revenue largely exceeding the budget anticipations, especially under opium and railways), notwithstanding further grants of £1,000,000 to various Provincial Governments in connection with the new Provincial Settlements concluded with them, which will be referred to later on, and £727,000 for other special purposes, including contributions by the Government of India towards the improvement of Calcutta and Simla.

In introducing the budget for this year, Sir Edward made an extremely interesting calculation as to the financial position of India, based on the commercial value of its assets and liabilities, which is produced below :—

“ The credit of a country largely depends on the outstanding amount of its public debt. The public debt of India on March 31, 1902, including temporary and unfunded debt, liabilities on account of Post Office Savings Banks, Provident Funds, and minor items, was £222,474,000.

“ This is relatively a small sum, being only the equivalent of about three years' revenues, but the figure in itself may seem somewhat large to those who have not realised the great value of the assets held against this debt by the Government of India. It seems to me that it would be well to explain the nature and value of these assets, and to submit a statement of our financial position from the purely commercial point of view.

“ From the purely accounts point of view, a statement of our position is annually included in the accounts

published by the Secretary of State, and this statement, whilst showing correctly, as regards book-accounting, the total amount expended on productive public works, such as railways and canals, does not allow credit for their actual market value. As a purely commercial calculation, I have arbitrarily, but I think fairly, capitalised the value of State railways and canals at twenty-five years' purchase of net annual average revenue for the three years ending March 31, 1902, and such capitalised value amounts to £262,065,000. In addition to this asset, we held at that date cash balances in England and India, and balances in mints, small coin depôts, &c., amounting to £20,723,000, as also £3,454,000 in the Gold Reserve Fund, whilst a sum of £12,754,000 was due to Government on account of advances to Native States, corporations, and other public bodies, including £2,266,000 due by cultivators for *takavi* loans. These sums brought up the total commercial value of our assets on March 31, 1902, to £300,996,000.

“Against these commercial assets we must set off the amount of the Public Debt, already noted as £222,474,000, and the capitalised amount of our liabilities on account of the railways, and some minor obligations. The former, including the capital value of terminable annuities created for the purchase of the four old Guaranteed Companies, the capital raised through companies working purchased railways, and the capitalised amount, at twenty-five years' purchase, of guaranteed interest, payable to the new Guaranteed Companies, amounted to £94,787,000, whilst minor obligations amounted to £5,547,000, thus bringing up our total commercial indebtedness to £322,808,000.

“According to this calculation the balance of our commercial indebtedness on March 31, 1902, amounted to £21,812,000.

“We should, I think, however, take into account our assets and liabilities in connection with the two remaining old Guaranteed Companies’ railways, the Bombay-Baroda, and the Madras. The capital value of these assets, at twenty-five years’ purchase of net annual average share of revenue payable to Government for the three years ending March 31, 1902, was £20,842,000. The liability in connection with the same cannot be stated definitely, since it will, in the end, depend on the price at which the railways may eventually be purchased by Government; for the purpose of my commercial calculation, I have, however, assumed the liability as equivalent to twenty-five years’ purchase of the average annual payments of interest during the three years ending March 31, 1902, and this amounts to £24,824,000.

“Taking, then, the two remaining old Guaranteed Companies’ railways into account, on the basis I have assumed, I must add £3,982,000 to our liabilities, and admitting this calculation, we still only show a total liability, for excess of commercial liabilities over assets, of £25,794,000.

“I think it may be fairly held that the position is even better than I have shown by the calculation of commercial values on an arbitrary basis, and it must be remembered that in our railways and canals we have a steadily improving property.”

As Sir Edward observed in conclusion, “there are few States in Europe or elsewhere which can boast of such a thoroughly sound financial position”; and since that time the favourable character of India’s assets has

increased, owing to further reduction of ordinary unproductive debt, and its conversion into debt incurred for productive public works purposes, which yields a profit to the State exceeding the rate which it pays for interest. In his Financial Statement for 1909-10, the present Indian Finance Minister, Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, estimated that, taking the position as it stood at the end of March 1908, the Public Works borrowings of the Indian Government "had enabled us to pay the interest¹ on our whole debt and to secure a net surplus of £0.4 million, whereas in 1887-88 the net annual burden of debt was £4.08 million." He added that it might be of interest to mention that the gross charge of £8,000,000 on the Indian debt represented only 8d. per head of the population, and was less than one-sixth of the corresponding burden borne by the citizens of any other large and civilised country.

Sir Edward Law in this Budget Statement also made the following remarks on Currency policy, which are reproduced, in addition to what has already been said on this subject, to show the clear view that he took of the situation:—

"I may point out that our position as regards currency and exchange is now somewhat as follows: We have virtually relegated our rupee currency to the position of a token currency, and we are now practically in the position of bankers who have issued a certain amount of fiduciary currency (whether paper or metal is immaterial), and to maintain the value of this fiduciary currency we are bound to be in a position to exchange it for gold when presented for conversion to meet legitimate trade requirements. As I have already

¹ *I.e.*, for the year 1907-8.

mentioned, we hold in the Gold Reserve Fund a sum of £3,810,730, and in the Currency Reserve we have about £9,073,853, also in gold. The gold in the Currency Reserve flows freely in and out according to circumstances and monetary conditions, but the demand for the metal is generally small. Gold coins, though demanded by bankers, seemingly chiefly for remittance purposes, are apparently but rarely used in local circulation, and private demands for export are limited by the action of Government in curtailing the sale of Council Bills whenever exchange approaches export point, gold being remitted, when necessary, to the Secretary of State in substitution for sales of Council Bills. The position of gold in the Indian Currency Reserve may, I think, be compared with that of gold in the Bank of England, which is held at the free disposition of the public, the difference being that the demands in India are comparatively small, for the reasons I have given. The gold in the Gold Reserve Fund is held under conditions more nearly resembling those under which gold is held by the Bank of France. It will only be when the temporary curtailment of Council Bills is found insufficient to check a fall in exchange, and when the gold in the Currency Reserve is exhausted, *i.e.*, when the balance of indebtedness is seriously adverse to India to an extent that we need hardly anticipate, that any serious demand can arise on the Gold Reserve Fund.

“There are both advantages and disadvantages in having a silver instead of a paper fiduciary currency. The silver always has an intrinsic value of high proportion to the nominal value of the circulating medium, but that value is fluctuating and has an unfortunate present tendency to depreciate. A note has no intrinsic value,

and there can therefore be no question of fluctuation in its value."

He likewise referred to the universalisation of the 5-rupee note, a matter which has already been mentioned, and on which no more need now be said.

The budget for 1904-5 provided an estimated surplus of £919,000, after making necessary additions to public expenditure, including an additional grant of £1,250,000 for army services, of which £494,000 was on account of increased pay to British troops, and £700,000 for new armament. On the subject of increased military charges, which Sir Edward always accepted with reluctance, but was convinced to be inevitable, he was largely influenced not merely by his own military experience, and by his personal knowledge of the political situation as it then stood with special reference to Russia, but by the fact that the South African War had shown grave defects which needed remedy in India as elsewhere, and that Lord Kitchener was applying his great knowledge and immense capacity to reorganising the Indian Army on a more efficient footing.

The actual surplus of the year was £3,456,000, in spite of further expenditure amounting to nearly £1,200,000 on army services in connection largely with Lord Kitchener's reorganisation scheme—which will be dealt with later—owing, again, to the actual revenues being largely in excess of budget anticipation, more especially under the heads Railways and Opium.

It did not fall to Sir Edward to introduce the budget for 1905-6, but as he had left office very shortly before it was framed, and had dealt with the proposals which it embodied, it may be fairly placed to his credit. Further reductions of taxation were now made—viz., another 8

annas per maund on the salt duty, at an estimated cost of 183 lakhs, and the abolition of certain special famine cesses which had hitherto been levied in Northern India and the Central Provinces, at a cost of $22\frac{2}{3}$ lakhs. Other important features in this budget were :—

(1) An improvement of Postal facilities involving a loss of revenue of 7 lakhs.

(2) The initiation of a large scheme for the reform and improvement of the Police administration throughout India, consequent on the recommendations of a Commission appointed for this purpose by Lord Curzon in 1902. The total eventual cost of carrying out the Commission's proposals was estimated at 150 lakhs, or £1,000,000 per annum, and in 1905-6 an instalment of one-third of this was supplied in the shape of grants to the Provincial Governments.

(3) A permanent grant of 35 lakhs a-year to Local Governments for the development of primary Education.

(4) A similar grant of 20 lakhs for the improvement of Agriculture.

(5) A recurring grant, the immediate cost of which was estimated at 56 lakhs per annum, to District Boards—local bodies whose functions correspond in some degree with those of County Councils in England. These bodies suffered from perpetual lack of funds for carrying out the objects of utility which form the chief part of their expenditure—viz., local roads, education (mainly in the primary stage), medical relief, sanitation, and vaccination. It was now determined to give them a grant amounting to one-fourth of the receipts they derived from the cess on land, which forms the largest item in their revenues.

The total cost of these measures was about £2,500,000,

and nevertheless the year was estimated to close with a surplus of £904,000. As usual, this estimate was largely exceeded by the continued growth of revenue, and the actual surplus of the year was £2,092,000.

We have now to consider the share taken by Sir Edward Law in obtaining better financial relations between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. The previous history of the financial settlements made between the Government of India and the Governments of the principal Provinces was set forth as follows in paras. 54-58 of the Report of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation, which was drafted by the present writer:—

“For more than a generation subsequent to 1833, the public finances were centralised in the hands of the Government of India. Save in respect to local cesses which were levied in some Provinces, principally for roads, schools, and other items of local expenditure, each Provincial Government was absolutely dependent on sums annually assigned to it by the Central Government for the upkeep of its administrative services.

“In 1870-71, however, the Government of Lord Mayo made the major Provinces financially responsible for the administration of police, jails, medical services, registration, education, roads and buildings, and printing, by assigning to each a fixed sum from which such expenditure was to be met. Any increase in outlay was to be provided for by savings on existing charges, or by the imposition of local taxes. In respect to the services assigned to them, the Provincial Governments were given power, subject to certain general conditions still in force, to create appointments and raise salaries up to an individual limit of Rs. 250 a-month. This delegation

obviated many petty references to the Government of India.

“The Local Governments had power to allot the revenue thus assigned to them at their discretion, subject to general financial rules. The expenditure was placed under a single heading, ‘Provincial Services,’ in the Budget of India, and the Government of India did not check or alter the detailed Provincial estimates.

“In 1877-79 the Government of Lord Lytton made a material alteration in the terms of financial settlements thus concluded with Provincial Governments. While Lord Mayo’s scheme of financial decentralisation had effected a large reform, it suffered from the defect that the services in which the Provinces were given a financial interest were relatively few, and that the Local Governments had no interest in developing the revenues raised through their agency. The new settlements now made gave the Provincial Governments financial responsibility in regard to other heads of expenditure, assigning to them the financial control of services connected with general administration, land revenue, excise, stamps, law and justice; and at the same time gave them, generally speaking, the revenues raised from law and justice, excise, stamps, and the license (now income) tax. But any increase over their revenues as they stood at the time of the assignment was to be shared with the Government of India, who were also to bear a share of any decrease. The Local Governments were still, however, not interested in the development of any revenues other than those covered by the assigned heads, which were far from sufficient to meet their liabilities, with the result that their income had to be largely supplemented by fixed grants. The settlements with Burma and Assam,

which were the last of this series, made, however, an important new departure, by substituting a share of the land revenue, in both provinces, and of some other receipts in Burma, for fixed assignments.

“On the other hand, in view of the great extent to which the financial functions of the Local Governments were enlarged by these settlements, Provincial receipts and expenditure were again shown in greater detail in the Imperial Budget. They now appear there under the various budget heads, but there are separate columns to indicate the distinction between Imperial and Provincial moneys. The liberty of the Local Governments to meet a deficit in current revenue by expenditure from Provincial balances was at the same time curtailed.

“In 1882 fresh settlements were made with the major Provinces. The receipts from customs, salt, opium, post office and telegraphs, remained wholly Imperial. Receipts from forests, excise, license (now income) tax, stamps, and registration, were divided equally between the Government of India and the Provinces; while the receipts classified under the head ‘Provincial Rates’ were made entirely Provincial and local, and the receipts from law and justice, public works and education, were also provincialised. The bulk of the receipts from railways and irrigation remained Imperial. The division of expenditure liabilities followed, generally speaking, the incidence of the corresponding heads of receipts. But as the outlay devolving on the Provincial Governments was larger than the revenues assigned to them, the balance was made up by a percentage on the land revenue of each Province, which was otherwise an Imperial receipt.

“By these settlements the Provincial Governments

obtained the same financial powers in regard to expenditure under divided heads, which now, to a considerable extent, took the place of heads entirely Provincial or Imperial, as they had enjoyed with reference to heads which were wholly Provincial.

“The 1882 settlements were quinquennial, and accordingly the Provincial settlements were revised in 1887, in 1892, and again in 1897. The sphere of revenue ordinarily divisible between the Government of India and the Provinces was extended by the inclusion of land revenue, while railways became almost entirely Imperial. The specific arrangements for the sharing of revenue and the allocation of expenditure varied from time to time in the different Provinces, and need not be referred to here. It will suffice to observe that as the shares of divided revenue were not ordinarily sufficient for the normal administrative requirements of the Provinces, these received, in addition, a special fixed assignment adjusted under the land revenue head.”

The quinquennial settlement system thus arrived at had, however, the drawback of provoking periodical controversies between the Provincial Governments and the Government of India, which was at once party and judge in the case, and of tempting the Provinces to hurry into large expenditure towards the end of a settlement period in view to make out a case for better treatment in the next settlement, or to avoid the Government of India's resumption of the ascertained surplus of their revenues over their expenditure. It was clear that a more satisfactory method was desirable, and Sir James Westland, one of Sir Edward Law's immediate predecessors in the Finance Membership, initiated a scheme under which the Local Governments were to receive

assignments from the Government of India on a low scale and make up the deficit by special Provincial taxation. This scheme was, however, stoutly resisted by the Provinces, and was finally dropped as impracticable. A new method had therefore to be devised, and when the financial settlements of 1897 fell due for revision in 1902, they were provisionally extended, with special assistance to Local Governments which were in peculiar need of this, until the growing prosperity of the country would warrant a more liberal system of Provincial settlements.

Proposals to this effect, for which Sir Edward Law was primarily responsible, were submitted to the Secretary of State in 1902, and subsequently circulated for the criticism of Local Governments, by whom they were cordially welcomed, and the new scheme was initiated in 1904. The outstanding feature of the scheme was that the settlements were to be *quasi*-permanent. The general principles on which it was based have been summarised as follows by the Financial Secretary to the Government of India in his evidence before the Decentralisation Commission:—

“(a) That the Government of India shall retain certain administrative services which it is inexpedient to hand over to the Provincial Governments, and that they shall reserve the revenue from those services, and such a share of the other public revenues as shall be adequate to the expenditure falling upon them.

“(b) That the remaining administrative services of the country being entrusted to Provincial Governments, each Local Government shall receive an assured income, which will be independent of the needs of the Government of India, and sufficient for its normal expenditure.

“(c) That this income shall be given in the form of a defined share of the revenue which the Local Government collects, in order that the Local Government’s resources may expand along with the needs of its administration.

“(d) That, as far as possible, the same share of the chief sources of revenue shall be given to each Province, to insure a reasonable equality of treatment.

“Under the existing system, a Local Government need not fear, in any except very abnormal circumstances, the resumption of its surplus revenue by the Imperial Government; it can count upon a reasonable continuity of policy; it will be able to enjoy fully the fruits of its economies, and it will not be hurried into ill-considered proposals in order to raise its apparent standard of expenditure. On the other hand, the Imperial Government improves its relations with the Local Governments by avoiding five-yearly controversies over the settlement; it can calculate its own resources with more confidence, and can undertake reductions of taxation or fresh schemes of expenditure with a clearer knowledge of the consequences than was formerly possible.”

The general effect of these settlements is summarised as follows in para. 61 of the Decentralisation Commission’s Report:—

“Generally speaking, the effect of these settlements is as follows. The Government of India receive the whole of the revenue accruing from opium, salt, customs, mint, railways, posts and telegraphs, and tributes from Native States, while the Provincial Governments get all receipts from registration and from the spending departments which they manage, such as police, educa-

tion, law and justice, and medical. The receipts from land revenue, excise, stamps, income-tax, and forests are divided between the Imperial and Provincial Governments generally in equal proportions. The receipts from the larger irrigation works are also generally shared: those from minor irrigation works are (except in one Province) wholly Provincial, as are also civil works' receipts other than those appertaining to Imperial buildings. The bulk of the Provincial revenues is derived from the divided heads.

“Expenditure in connection with sources of revenue which are wholly Imperial is Imperial also, while, subject to minor exceptions, Provincial revenues are responsible for the whole of the expenditure incurred within the Province in connection with land revenue (which includes district administration), registration, law and justice, police, jails, education, medical, stationery and printing, and provincial civil works. Charges relating to stamps, excise, income-tax, and forests are equally divided, while the incidence of Irrigation expenditure follows that of the receipts. The Provincial Governments are also responsible for the charges of such scientific and minor departments as they administer, and for political charges in connection with Native States under their control; but the bulk of the expenditure in connection with the Political Department falls on the Government of India, as do all ecclesiastical charges.

“The charges thrown on Provincial Governments by these settlements being, generally, somewhat in excess of the assigned revenues, the difference is (in such cases) made up, as formerly, by a fixed assignment under the land revenue head; but the present policy of the Government of India is to make such assignments as small as

possible, when the settlement is framed, so as to enable each Province to derive the bulk of its resources from growing revenues.

“Moreover, with these *quasi*-permanent settlements the Provincial Governments concerned have all received considerable initial lump-grants, principally with the object of enabling them to undertake works of public utility at an earlier date than would have been possible from their ordinary revenues. Further, the ordinary resources of the Provinces have been largely supplemented of late years by special grants (referred to above), principally for the development of police reform, agriculture, and education, and the Government of India have also made a special assignment to supplement the ordinary revenues of District Boards.”

The settlements of this description, for which Sir Edward Law was individually responsible, were those concluded with Madras, the United Provinces, Bengal, and Assam, with effect from 1904-5, and with Bombay and the Punjab with effect from 1905-6. Subsequently settlements of the same character were made with the other principal Provinces, while the settlements concluded with Madras and the United Provinces were revised, since the terms given to these Governments were less favourable than financial prosperity had allowed in the case of other subsequent settlements. The partition of Bengal also necessitated the supersession of the settlements made with Bengal and Assam by settlements with the new provinces of Bengal Proper and Assam *cum* Eastern Bengal. These settlements, and the principles underlying them, mark an enormous advance in the financial relations between the Government of India and the Local Governments

the latter being now given definite and *quasi*-permanent sources of revenue. The expression "*quasi*-permanent" connotes the fact that the settlements are not absolutely permanent, but are of necessity subject to revision in the case of some grave Imperial crisis, or in the event of experience proving the arrangements made to have been materially in deficiency or excess of normal Provincial requirements. Apart from such very special circumstances, however, the Provinces can now count on permanency in their budget arrangements, and on obtaining the benefits of economies, and of expanded revenues due to careful administration or the increasing prosperity of the country. Moreover, as the Decentralisation Commission have remarked, the new settlements make it possible to give Provincial Governments larger administrative powers. Administrative reform usually involves additional expenditure, and under the old temporary settlements the Government of India were naturally chary in permitting the mortgage of resources to which they might lay a claim when the existing settlement came to an end. Under the present system this contingency does not arise, and the Provinces can be given much larger discretion in the application of surpluses. By this reform Sir Edward added fresh and abiding lustre to his tenure of office as Finance Minister in India. He recognised, however, that his scheme was not a final one, and the Provincial settlements have now undergone fresh revision in a direction which would have met with his full approval, that of still further enlarging the sphere of Provincial independence and responsibility in matters of finance.

Finally, we have to consider the share taken by Sir Edward in putting military expenditure on a more satis-

factory basis. As has been already observed, his military training and his intimate knowledge of the political situation made him ready to provide as far as possible for additional expenditure necessary to improve the efficiency of the Indian Army. At the same time his financial instincts and his constant zeal for economy obliged him to criticise a good deal of the outlay suggested by the military authorities. The situation was favourable for additional military expenditure, both by reason of the savings which had accrued under this head consequent on the employment of Indian troops in South Africa and in China, and by the constant expansion of revenues which formed such a marked feature of Sir Edward's tenure of office. The methods which he found in vogue when he assumed charge were, however, necessarily productive of friction. Proposals for expenditure were largely initiated by the Commander-in-Chief and the Army Headquarters Staff, who had at this time no direct financial responsibility, and if they were approved by the Military Member of Council, who also tended to look at things rather from the point of view of a soldier than of a financier, they were pressed upon the Finance Department without much regard to the position as regards ways and means. The Finance Department, on the other hand, looking at things primarily from a Treasury point of view, was naturally concerned with reducing expenditure as far as possible, and sometimes failed to grasp essential military requirements. Lord Kitchener, as Commander-in-Chief, saw the disadvantages of this position, while the fact that he tempered the proposals which he thought necessary in the interests of the army by an acute and constant zeal for all possible economies, won Sir Edward's com-

plete confidence. In 1904 Lord Kitchener put forward a scheme for placing the regulation of additional army expenditure on a more satisfactory and *quasi*-permanent footing, and this was warmly supported by Sir Edward, and was sanctioned by the Government of India and the Secretary of State. Under this system, which was provisionally sanctioned for a period of five years, the Indian Army received an additional grant of about two million sterling a-year, and out of this grant all additional expenditure which was not of a purely petty nature had to be provided. The results of this system, which was worked by Lord Kitchener to the great advantage of the Indian Army, which he reorganised as a far more efficient instrument for war than it had been in times past, were thus summarised by him in his speech in the Budget debate in 1909:—

“Formerly the military and financial authorities in India had very little in common. The military authorities had but slight interest in economy, while the financial authorities concerned themselves as little with considerations of military efficiency. That two great departments of the same Government should thus regard each other as adversaries, rather than as allies working together to obtain results satisfactory to both, was clearly opposed to all business principles. It is not a matter of surprise that the Finance Department failed to secure possible economies, or that the military authorities were hampered in their struggles for efficiency. Two main factors have brought about an alteration—and, I hope, a permanent alteration—in this respect. On the one hand, the fixing for a term of years of an annual maximum beyond which special military expenditure could not be incurred has taught

the soldiers that economical administration is a military as well as a financial interest, and has accustomed them to scrutinise every demand for money with the utmost care before it is put forward, lest by supporting measures which are merely desirable they should jeopardise those which are essential. On the other hand, the creation of a special branch of the Finance Department to deal with military expenditure in close connection with the Army Department has, I think, given the financial authorities an insight—perhaps I may say a sympathetic insight—into the real requirements of the army which was formerly lacking.” Lord Kitchener himself would be the first to admit that the better relations thus obtained between the Finance and Army Departments are in large measure due to Sir Edward’s sympathy and expert knowledge.

One of the measures here referred to by Lord Kitchener, the creation of a special Military Finance Branch of the Government of India, was, however, carried out after Sir Edward Law had left India, and as a consequence of the regrettable differences of opinion between Lord Kitchener and Lord Curzon in the matter of army administration, which terminated in the resignation of the latter. Lord Kitchener—the most distinguished working soldier of the Empire—naturally chafed under a system by which he was practically subordinate, in all matters relating to expenditure and general administration, to the Military Member, a soldier junior to himself. This system led to constant friction between the Commander-in-Chief and Army Headquarters on the one hand and the Military Department of the Government of India on the other; while on the occasions on which both parties were agreed, the Commander-in-Chief,

being an Extraordinary Member of Council, was able to throw in a second vote as against the Finance Department when the latter had, in the interests of economy, combated suggestions for further expenditure. Lord Kitchener held the position to be an intolerable one, and maintained that either he or the Military Member should be supreme, subject to the control of the Government of India as a whole, in matters of army administration, but that there was not room for both. This controversy first assumed a temporarily acute form in 1904, when Lord Ampthill was Viceroy in Lord Curzon's absence; but it was then temporarily assuaged, with Sir Edward Law's complete concurrence, by giving the Commander-in-Chief control over the transport branch of the Supply and Transport Corps, which had hitherto been under the direct administration of the Military Member. This, however, was but a temporary palliative, and in 1905, soon after Lord Curzon had returned to India, the controversy broke out again, Lord Kitchener once more pressing his views, while Lord Curzon and the other members of the Government of India held that his proposals would give the Commander-in-Chief an undesirable autocracy in army matters, and that it was essential that the Viceroy should have another high expert adviser in the person of the Military Member of Council. Sir Edward had by this time left India; but he was a prominent member of a committee appointed by Mr Brodrick (now Lord Middleton), the then Secretary of State, to consider the question at home. The result of this Committee's report and of Mr Brodrick's orders thereon was that the Commander-in-Chief, while retaining his executive control over the army, became also the Member of

Council in charge of an Army Department which dealt with most of the business relating to the army coming before the Government of India. A Department of Military Supply, under a separate Member of Council, was, however, retained, to deal with matters connected with military stores, ordnance, and remounts, besides administering the Indian Medical Service in its military aspect, and the Royal Indian Marine.

The financial control over military expenditure under these new arrangements was intensified by the constitution of a Military Finance Branch of the Finance Department under a separate Secretary, who, while remaining the subordinate of the Finance Member, was also the financial adviser of the Commander-in-Chief and of the Member for Military Supply, and dealt, in close communication with Army Headquarters and the Army and Supply Departments, with all military matters involving additional expenditure, while he had under him at the same time the Military Accounts Department. The results of this measure were all to the advantage of proper financial control, since the Finance Department was put into touch with military projects at an early stage, and was thus able to enforce objections which would have been less regarded after such projects had obtained a more definite shape. The military and financial authorities were also, as stated by Lord Kitchener, brought into more cordial and sympathetic communication.

A further development of this policy has since taken place by the abolition of the Member for Military Supply, and the vesting of all army matters which come before the Government of India in the Commander-in-Chief as Army Member. At the same time (1909), with

the expiry of the five-year period for which the special grant made for all additional military expenditure had been fixed, this special method was given up. It had largely served its purpose, under the efficient management of Lord Kitchener, in bringing the army to a high pitch of efficiency. Moreover, thanks to our improved relations with Russia, the political situation was now much more clear, and at the same time the financial position was much less satisfactory than it had been in Sir Edward Law's time. Accordingly the Secretary of State decided that hereafter all additional military expenditure should be dealt with on its own merits.

We can now sum up the main results of Sir Edward Law's work as Finance Member. When he assumed office the financial situation was still very clouded, and the Currency experiment on which the Government of India had embarked was still being carried out under enormous difficulties. When he left the sky had cleared. The Currency system had been put on a sound and assured basis by the formation of the Gold Standard Reserve. The prosperity of the country, and careful and economical administration of the finances, had enabled liberal remissions of taxation and large and beneficial expenditure on various purposes of administrative reform. The railway budget of the Government of India, instead of showing a deficit, was yielding large surpluses. The financial arrangements with the Provinces had been placed on a satisfactory basis, and military expenditure had been efficiently regularised. There are few Finance Ministers of any country who have such a complete tale of successes to their credit.

As regards the commercial side of his department, it

has already been shown that Sir Edward took the keenest interest in this branch of his work, and that he did all he could, with the inadequate means then at his disposal, to develop the dealings of the Government with commerce, and to lay the foundations for a really well-equipped Commerce Department. Every budget of his contains a profoundly informing review of the economic conditions of the country.

Agriculture, too, although not under his immediate control, was a pet child of his. His budgets contain repeated references to the progress and needs of the staple Indian products, such as grains, cotton, jute, indigo, tea, and coffee; and he was very desirous of seeing a portion of the raw produce which India exports worked up in the country itself to the advantage of its economic progress. He was further keenly interested in the development of village industries. He was also largely instrumental in procuring a closer connection between the Government of India and agricultural development, which had previously been left almost entirely in the hands of the Provincial Governments, by obtaining the appointment of an Imperial Inspector-General of Agriculture, whose functions were thus described in a circular-letter by the Government of India upon his appointment in 1901:—

“ Apart from the prosecution of such independent inquiries as may be desirable, it will be the duty of the Inspector-General to guide and co-ordinate the experiments which are being made under the orders of Local Governments and to publish and criticise their results; to indicate new lines which inquiry may profitably follow; and to respond to the requests of private investigators for assistance or advice. It will be open to

Provincial Governments to consult him on subjects in which the opinion of an agricultural expert will be of value, and his opinion should obviously be taken on any new schemes of experiment or inquiry which may be in view. In regard to the Government of India, his position will be that of an adviser on matters connected with agriculture. It is not proposed to invest him with any direct authority over Provincial Departments of Agriculture; nor is it anticipated that any such authority will be needed in order to secure the advantages which will result from his guidance. But he will be authorised to correspond direct with the heads of these departments; and he will, indeed, regard the maintenance of close personal relations with them as essential to the proper discharge of his functions. His duties will of course lie more in the field than in the office; and constant tours will be necessary, not only in order to keep him in touch with other investigators, but to gain that close acquaintance with the agricultural conditions of the country, which alone can indicate the scope which exists for improvements and the possibilities of effecting them."

The Decentralisation Commission found that, while other Inspectors-General attached to the Government of India were regarded with suspicion and dislike by several of the Provincial Governments, the services of this Inspector-General of Agriculture had been welcomed with great satisfaction.

An ancillary reform was the institution of a College of Agriculture at Pusa in Bengal, directly under the Government of India. This college, which has not yet obtained its full development, is intended to afford a post-graduate education in the higher branches of agricultural science to *alumni* who have received a

preliminary training in Provincial colleges, and its staff is also engaged in important research work.

Another matter which Sir Edward Law had the satisfaction of helping to push to a satisfactory conclusion was the extension of agricultural credit. The Indian raiyat lives largely from hand to mouth, and is peculiarly at the mercy of changing seasons. He is therefore constantly in need of temporary loans and advances, but he cannot ordinarily obtain these save at an enormous interest from local money-lenders. The Government has, it is true, always granted special loans, termed *takavi* advances, to agriculturists for the improvement of their holdings, and in connection with the purchase of seed or cattle in times of distress. The funds thus available are necessarily, however, limited, and it became essential for the sound development of Indian agriculture that the raiyats should be able to obtain loans from one another on moderate terms, by the institution of co-operative credit societies, such as those which have been so successful in Central Europe under the inspiration of Raffeisen and others. An Act to enable this was passed by the Government of India in 1904, and was the outcome of the report of a committee over which Sir Edward presided. It provided for the organisation of co-operative credit societies on lines which had been carefully thought out, for their development and general control by the Local Governments, and for initial assistance from Government in the way of loans. Many persons doubted whether the plant thus sown would really flourish in Indian soil. It was thought that it would be difficult to get the raiyats to combine for common purposes, and that the opposition of the money-lenders would crush the development of the new agencies. Time has, however,

triumphantly refuted these objections; co-operative credit societies have taken rapid root over the greater part of India, and their capital and their transactions are daily increasing. As an instance of Sir Edward Law's keen practical interest in this matter, it may be mentioned that, while the general question was still under discussion, he instituted a co-operative credit society for the clerks of his own department, presided at its meetings, and took some of the first shares himself. He wished, too, to institute regular agricultural banks, but was unable to push this question through.

Sir Edward's keen interest in railway development has already been noted, and his experience and knowledge of irrigation enabled him to give powerful support to the development of State expenditure upon well-considered irrigation schemes. As regards ordinary public works, his attitude was more critical. He appreciated the advantages of these, but held that the expenditure upon them was in many cases extravagant.

Education was another branch of Government activity in which he took a keen interest (he was specially desirous of promoting a sound system of technical education, and primary agricultural schools); and an article which he published in 'Blackwood's Magazine' in August 1907 showed that he was fully cognisant of the grave defects in the present Indian educational system which have lately been so accurately analysed by M. Chailley in his 'Administrative Problems of British India' (English version).¹ The whole of this article

¹ Sir Edward was also in accord with M. Chailley—*vide* an article which he wrote on "Justice in India" in the 'St George's Review' for July 1908—in criticising the excessive complexity of our judicial system, and the encouragement which this gives to excessive and unnecessary litigation. "The system of justice [he there wrote] which the Oriental understands and appre-

indeed merits full and careful perusal, as embodying the views of a very acute and competent observer on the weaknesses of present-day British administration. These consisted, as he held, not merely in a defective educational system, but in the license accorded to an ill-disposed and unscrupulous section of the Native Press,¹ and in the excessive centralisation which was the accompaniment to a bureaucratic system of Government, and which was far more strongly marked, as regards its evil effects, in the Provincial administrations than under the Central Government. Lastly, he dwelt on the lessening touch with the people brought about by the facilities afforded to British officials for taking leave to Europe, and the constant transfers in appointments, a matter which was subsequently set forth with special emphasis by the Royal Commission on Decentralisation.

With the partition of Bengal, a measure which has taken such a prominent place in Indian politics of late years, Sir Edward was in general sympathy. His own view (as expressed in the article above-mentioned) was indeed in accord with that which has been likewise expressed by Sir Bampfylde Fuller, that what India needs in the way of administrative agency is a number of smaller Provinces, presided over by Chief Commissioners, who could govern in a more patriarchal fashion and give more personal consideration to the details of administration than is possible in the case

ciates, is that of the ruler sitting in the gateway or under a tree, to receive petitions and complaints, and deciding according to his instinct and lights without attaching too much importance to the mere verbal statements of witnesses."

¹ This has lately been checked by the Indian Press Act of 1910, a measure which Sir Edward would have heartily welcomed.

of large Provinces ruled by a Lieutenant-Governor or a Governor in Council.

In all matters connected with the foreign relations of India, especially those concerning Russia, Turkey, and Persia, Sir Edward was a most valuable adviser, by reason of the special experience and knowledge he had of such problems.

He was thus a Member of the Viceroy's Council whose activities were by no means confined to his own special sphere; but who was possessed of wide interests and large knowledge which he was always ready to place at the disposal of his colleagues. Other portions of this work have shown what manner of man he was personally. It will suffice to say here that his genial Irish temperament, his humour and *bonhomie*, and his wide knowledge of men and things, rendered him a chief who inspired devotion, and a member of the Government who elicited affection and esteem even among those who might be most strongly opposed to some of his views. He specially laid himself out to make the acquaintance of the leading members of the commercial community, and they repaid his attentions with confidence and respect. As an official, he shone more in personal discussion than in paper-minuting. The fact that he had not spent the best years of his life in office work made him somewhat weak occasionally in official dialectic; and it every now and then happened that he was worsted in this respect by others who had a poorer case to work upon. But when matters came to personal discussion, his full powers asserted themselves. To his personal friends he would on occasion pour out reminiscences of his singularly varied career, and of the many exalted and interesting personages whom he had met in different parts of the

world, which, coloured as they were by his acute sense of humour and marvellous power of mimicry, were of the most absorbing interest. The hours which the present writer was privileged, on many occasions, to spend with Sir Edward in talk of this description will always be among his most cherished reminiscences.

Nor did Sir Edward's interest in India and in Indian topics cease when he left the country. Indian affairs were always a matter of deep and affectionate interest with him, and he often gave time that he could ill spare from his business preoccupations at home to write and speak upon them. He loved and served India well, and as the regretful and sympathetic comments which his death called forth in that country showed, he did not love or serve in vain.

CHAPTER X.

SIR EDWARD LAW AS MEMBER OF COUNCIL IN INDIA.

1900-1905.

IN a previous chapter, Sir Edward Law's work as Finance Minister of India has been fully described; the object of the present chapter is to give some account of his share in the deliberations of Lord Curzon's Council. The account must be imperfect, for the Council, speaking generally, is a very harmonious body; neither the Viceroy nor an individual member claims all the credit or bears all the responsibility for any of its acts.

For the harmonious working of the Council, during his term in office, Sir Edward Law deserves his full share of credit. He was never prolix, never unwilling to listen or to make concessions; his humour lightened the labours of his colleagues, and his varied experience often suggested that a problem new to Indian administrators had been encountered and solved elsewhere. In the debates of the Legislative Council, he sometimes felt himself at a disadvantage because he had to compete with more practised speakers. Perhaps he did not quite realise that the man who knows his subject may produce more effect with a few words than the fluent speaker

produces with many paragraphs. In the endless discussion which is carried on with pen and paper, the advantage lay with the Finance Member; his notes were so concise that his meaning could not be missed.

Before Sir Edward arrived, the Council had contracted the habit of discussing estimates, and especially military estimates, at unnecessary length; there was a prolonged duel between the Military Member, anxious to perfect his machine, and the Finance Member, who was thinking of the budget. Sir Edward Law did much to introduce methods at once less burdensome and more effective. As a soldier he understood the details of the estimate, and the spending departments readily accepted his advice.

When questions of internal policy were under discussion the quality which endeared Sir Edward to the business community was the directness and simplicity of his mind. If he wished to know how trade and industry were affected by his measures, he preferred to obtain information not from official files but on the spot and from the persons chiefly concerned. For this reason he attached great importance to those informal tours which have always been recognised as forming part of the duty incumbent on a Member of Council. When the Viceroy is on tour he is compelled to live nearly all his life in public; he receives many formal deputations; his speeches are received as declarations of policy. A Member of Council on tour makes as few speeches as he can, and takes care to say nothing that would pledge his chief or his colleagues. These conventions were faithfully observed by Sir Edward Law, but his tours were of service to Government: they gave him first-hand knowledge of industrial conditions, and

they gave the people the assurance of his sympathy and co-operation.

He placed himself with apparent ease in friendly relations with Anglo-Indian business men, and he welcomed every opportunity of consulting Indian gentlemen interested in the economic progress of the country. He was always a little afraid that the officialism natural to a highly organised administration might deprive us of the advantage which men like Warren Hastings had gained by cultivating the friendship of the leaders of Indian opinion.

In Sir Edward's time the words “Unrest in India” were not, as yet, a standing headline in our newspapers; but, along with many signs of progress, his observant eye noted also the signs of coming trouble. He saw that the Government of India was losing its hold on certain classes of the community, and he attributed this unsatisfactory change to our comparative neglect of those Indians who have real influence with their countrymen; to the excesses of the disloyal Press; but most of all to our defective system of education. He wished to give a more practical turn to our policy in this matter, and he criticised the Universities Act of 1904 because it made no advance in that direction. He admitted, however, that the Act took the first step towards improvement by providing the Indian Universities with governing bodies composed of University men who understood the needs of higher education and could be trusted to work out their own salvation. The Act has already produced results of great value; we may hope that in time it will produce the result which Sir Edward Law desired. Both in England and in India we must learn to realise that the young men who attend

our colleges are not usually brought thither by the abstract love of knowledge. They ask us to train them for something definite, and to give them the certainty that their education will fit them for success in the business of life. This can be done, and it will be done when we cease to repose a blind faith in the examination system—the biggest and blackest idol now worshipped in India,—and when we allow more importance to practical training and to those agencies and conditions which make for character. Sir Edward was in full sympathy with every effort to improve the quality of the higher education; at the same time, he always insisted that education should be given without Anglicising the students. It distressed him to see young Indians copying too closely the dress and habits of Europeans; the models he suggested for their imitation were those Indian princes who have kept abreast of the times without abandoning what was dignified and gracious in the habits of their ancestors. He cordially approved the methods adopted in the College founded by Sir Syed Ahmed at Aligarh, where the English professors have the chief part in the teaching of the place, while the object of the College as a society is to train capable, cultivated, and public-spirited Mahomedans.

During Sir Edward's last year of office the question of army administration assumed a highly controversial aspect; those who had any share in deciding the matter had to face the unwelcome duty of voting against one or other of the contending champions. Lord Kitchener had expressed his entire dissatisfaction with the system under which administrative business belonged to the

Military Member of Council, while the Commander-in-Chief was without a department of his own, and indeed without adequate facilities for bringing his plans to the notice of the Governor-General in Council. Sir Edward Law had studied the previous history of the question, and had come to the conclusion that the relations between Army Headquarters and the Military Department had always been a cause of friction and delay. The existing arrangement might suit a Commander-in-Chief who did not wish to be troubled with business; it became an absurdity when the army was commanded by an administrator of proved ability. Sir Edward left India before the final orders of the Secretary of State were received; but he had indicated his belief that Lord Kitchener's criticism was well founded. On his return to England Sir Edward had a considerable share in elaborating a scheme under which the Military Member was replaced by a Military Supply Member with less extensive powers, while a new Army Department was created and placed in charge of the Commander-in-Chief. This, of course, was only a transition to the more thorough-going scheme sanctioned by Lord Morley, under which the "transient embarrassed phantom" of the Military Supply Member disappeared and Lord Kitchener became the sole representative of the Army in the Governor-General's Council. Lord Curzon had contended that the supremacy of the civil authorities would be impaired if his Government should be deprived of the assistance of a military adviser independent (during his term of office) of the Commander-in-Chief. Sir Edward had never admitted the soundness of this contention, and, when he was set free to express

his opinion, he took an active part in the controversy which ensued. He did not shrink from the duty of testifying to what he regarded as sound principles of army administration; he was sincerely distressed to find himself in opposition to Lord Curzon, with and under whom he had worked in India, and for whose abilities and character he entertained the highest respect. He was all the more distressed because he knew that no Viceroy had been more unfairly disparaged than Lord Curzon was by a section of the Indian Press.

It is needless to say that Sir Edward Law followed with keenest interest the early stages of Mr Chamberlain's campaign for Tariff Reform. His own thoughts had for some time been tending in the same direction as Mr Chamberlain's; a subsequent chapter will indicate the conclusions at which he arrived. As Finance Minister in India he was committed to a tariff for revenue purposes only; he was not insensible to the arguments of those who urged that India ought not to accede to any plan of Imperial Preference until the interests of her own trade had been carefully considered and provided for. There was at that time some reason to apprehend that if the Tariff Reformers in England could settle terms of preference with the self-governing colonies, their scheme might then be presented as an accomplished fact which the Government of India would be constrained to accept: this feeling may partly account for the line of argument adopted in the Despatch of 22nd October 1903. In that Despatch and in the Minute by the Finance Member, which was sent home under the same cover, the fiscal question, as it affects India, was fully and ably discussed.

It is difficult for a Member of Council to limit himself to his own department, and Sir Edward Law had many interests in India not directly connected with finance. Thus, for example, when Lord Curzon entered on his valiant effort to save the ancient monuments of India from neglect and vandalism, he was well supported by his Finance Member, whose knowledge of Greece and Egypt enabled him to give practical advice and assistance. But the projects which engaged Sir Edward's fullest sympathy were those which concerned the welfare and happiness of the peasantry. He knew very well that little is gained by lightening the burden of taxation if the small cultivator is left at the mercy of the money-lender. During his first Simla season Sir Edward was a member of the Select Committee to which the Punjab Land Act of that year had been referred. At that time the state of his health would have entitled him to some indulgence; but he attended regularly, and he surprised the experts by the minuteness of his inquiries in regard to land tenures, forms of mortgage, and other mysteries of that nature. Of the share he had in conducting the inquiry relating to Co-operative Credit Societies, and in preparing the Act of 1904, some description has already been given.

The Foreign Department of the Government of India is under the direct supervision of the Viceroy, but important matters, as they arise, are always mentioned, and, if necessary, discussed in the Executive Council. Sir Edward's training and studies predisposed him to pay special attention to this branch of his work. Under Lord Curzon's management the relations between India

and foreign powers were, generally speaking, quite satisfactory. The death of the Amir Abdurrahman, in 1901, was not followed by any disturbance, and the good understanding established with him was continued with his successor Habibullah. In Persia the main objects of Lord Curzon's policy were the opening of trade routes, the extension of the telegraph system, and the maintenance of amicable relations with Persian Governors and border chieftains. These were all objects which Sir Edward understood and warmly approved. But India has another neighbour, whose proceedings in 1902 began to give cause for anxiety. The monkish Government at Lhasa persistently declined to give effect to their commercial treaties with us: British traders (mostly natives of India, going up to sell tea) were prevented from taking advantage of the promised facilities for trade. If the Government of India should fail to protect the legitimate commercial interests of its own subjects, it is tolerably plain that our north-eastern frontier would soon become unsafe; Tibetan, or rather Chinese ambition, would have unrestricted scope beyond the boundary of British India; the mountain States (Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan) would cease to rely on the friendly co-operation we have regularly maintained with them. The whole problem was anxiously considered in Council; the final discussion coincided, rather inappropriately, with the festivities of the Coronation Durbar at Delhi in January 1903. When he was free to publish his opinions, Sir Edward dealt fully with our Tibetan policy, and from what he then wrote we may infer that in Council he supported Lord Curzon, and concurred in the resolution which led to

the despatch of our Mission. The conduct of that enterprise was committed to the very capable hands of Sir Francis Younghusband and General Macdonald. The Finance Member of Council always took pride in the fact that the prudence of his estimates enabled him to provide for the expenses of the Mission without any serious disturbance of the financial arrangements for the year.

It will be remembered that the Dalai Lama, who returned Lord Curzon's letters unopened, had of his own accord sent special envoys to bespeak the goodwill of the Tsar: the Russian Ambassador in London assured Lord Lansdowne that this Mission had no political significance, and Lord Lansdowne very properly accepted the assurance. In Sir Edward Law's judgment this was an important element in the Tibetan difficulty. He felt strongly that when two great Empires, differing often in their ideals and methods, confronted one another in such a region as Central Asia, ceaseless vigilance and timely firmness were the price of peace. In private conversation he returned so frequently to this theme that some were tempted to describe him as a Russophobe. The word may or may not be English, but in any case it does not fairly describe Sir Edward Law's attitude. He had made many friends in Russia, and no British publicist had a more sympathetic sense of the vast responsibilities incumbent on the Government of the Tsar. He knew how often the aspirations of Russian statesmen had been checked by the dead-weight of the Asiatic provinces, or by the religious conservatism of the Christian peasantry. At the same time he was well aware that the military party, always strong and some-

times dominant, had always dallied with the notion of doing something adventurous in the direction of India. It should be the object of British statesmanship to exclude such hopes by cultivating the friendship of those Asiatic Powers which still retain their independence.

CHAPTER XI.

1905-1908.

LAW laid down his office and left India in January 1905. His health, which had been severely tried by the hardships of his adventurous life, had begun to give way in India, and the doctors, though they could not agree upon the nature of his complaint, were unanimous in prescribing rest. From India he went first to the Straits Settlements to visit his brother, Sir Archibald Law, who was at the time Chief Justice. During his stay at Penang he found the Government of the Straits Settlements engaged upon a currency problem very similar to that which had engrossed his attention in India, and he drew up a scheme for securing for the silver dollar of the Straits Settlements a fixed value in gold upon the lines of the Indian Gold Exchange standard. His memorandum was subsequently submitted to the Colonial Office, and his recommendations were partially adopted. From Penang he went to Egypt, in the hope that his health would benefit by the long sea voyage. Thence he proceeded by Monte Carlo to Paris and London.

He was now fifty-eight years of age, but he could not, like most of our public servants at the end of their

careers abroad, look forward to a life of repose at home. He had, it is true, spent the greater part of his manhood in the public service, which he had entered or re-entered no less than five times: as a subaltern in the Gunners, as a Reserve Officer in the Suakin campaign, as an agent of the Intelligence Department, as Commercial Attaché, and finally as Finance Minister in India; and the various Departments by which he had been employed had paid generous tributes to the value of the work he had done for them. He had been made a K.C.M.G. for his work in Eastern Europe, and after his return from India he received the signal honour of an invitation to Windsor, where he was created K.C.S.I. by King Edward himself at a special investiture. But for all this, he was not technically eligible for a pension, because his service had not been continuous, nor had it been rendered to one Department of the State.

Law had had good grounds for supposing that on his retirement from India a pension would be granted to him, but he had never attempted to make terms with the Government, and the Treasury, with whom, of course, the decision ultimately rested, opposed any infraction of the letter of the rule. Law's private means were such that he could not but feel this decision keenly. From the date of his appointment as Commercial Attaché he had devoted all his energies to the public service, and had never thought of making money for himself; the expenses which his official position entailed precluded the thought of saving, and his rigid sense of honour prevented him from taking advantage of innumerable opportunities of considering his own interests where less quixotic officials might, in fact, have done so without incurring censure. There is no

doubt that he could have made a large fortune in Eastern Europe, but in fact he left it a poor man. In India few Englishmen in the public service save money nowadays, and Law's lavish hospitality in Simla and Calcutta absolutely precluded him from the possibility of doing so. In these circumstances he decided that henceforth it was his duty, as he himself expressed it, "to make something for himself."

Law knew better than most of our officials who serve their country abroad how to accomplish this end, and he was not long in London before he began to make an income. One of the first positions that was offered him was that of Director of the Ionian Bank, an institution which had been established in 1839, the year in which Greece was declared an independent kingdom, and whose subsequent history had been closely bound up with that of Greece and the Ionian Islands. The steady improvement in the finances of Greece since the establishment of the international control had opened a new era for banking institutions connected with Greece, and it was appropriate that Law should be once more associated with work which owed so much to his initiative. The Board of Directors found him a most valuable acquisition by reason of the energy and ability with which he carried out his duties in London and the prestige which his name commanded in Greece. To Law himself the work in the Ionian Bank was a work of love, and when later the calls upon his time were numerous and more lucrative posts were open to him, it was suggested that he might sever his connection with the Ionian Bank. "Never!" he replied; "it was the first Directorship that was offered me, and it is a Greek one. I shall never give it up." Later on

he became a Director of the Anglo-Foreign Banking Association and of the Gresham Life Assurance Company; other posts were offered him, but want of the necessary capital prevented him from joining them.

He held two other appointments which were of a semi-official character, though the immediate nomination was made by the Bank of England: he acted as Censor in the International Bank of Morocco, and also as Administrator of the Quays of Constantinople. The duties connected with these two appointments rendered it necessary for him to visit Paris every fortnight; other journeys yet farther afield were entailed upon him by his other directorships, and he was thus enabled to keep up his connection with society on the Continent, with which his previous career had forged so many links.

The City had always attracted Law, and he thoroughly enjoyed his last years in London. "In the City," he used to say, "I need not do anything of which I do not approve nor accept any responsibility against my will. As a Government servant I had to submit to the decision of the Government and keep my worries to myself."

But though the City had this attraction for him, his temperament would not permit him to become absorbed in money-making. He had been associated with the handling of many large questions of public policy, and he retained a keen, almost passionate, interest in them after the official tie had been severed. His advice and assistance were always at the service of the Government, and he made large inroads upon the time which he had proposed to set aside for "making something for himself" by voluntary public service.

Soon after his return to London he was appointed a member of the committee appointed by the Secretary of State to advise him upon the reconstitution of the Army Department in India, on which he had the pleasure of working with Lord Roberts and Sir George White. Law had had the most recent experience of the working of the system, and, as an intimate friend of Lord Kitchener, he understood the irksomeness of the dual control over the army which the great soldier wished to abolish. The committee recommended such a redistribution of army work as freed the Commander-in-Chief from the interference of a colleague in purely military matters, but retained upon the Council a second soldier in charge of military supplies. This scheme has since been modified, and the army in India is now represented on the Viceroy's Council by one soldier only, as Lord Kitchener had from the first desired.

At the beginning of the year 1906 Law was appointed to represent the British Government in a piece of work in which his sympathies were deeply involved. In consequence of the state of affairs then prevailing in Crete, the four protecting Powers (England, France, Italy, and Russia) appointed an International Commission to inquire into the possibility of introducing "such reforms into the administration as would conduce to the welfare and content of all classes, and prevent the recurrence of such friction between opposing parties as that which resulted in the recent insurrectionary outbreak." In addition to these duties, which were common to the whole commission, Law received instructions to inquire and report as to the measures of financial and administrative reform which it would be expedient to introduce in the government of the island.

The cause was one which Law had very much at heart. The heroic history of the island had won his admiration, even in the days when he knew practically nothing of Greece. He had already visited it twice, when, as President of the Ottoman Debt, he had made an investigation into the economic and financial situation. He also knew and liked Prince George, the High Commissioner; he admired the Cretan leaders, the middle classes, and the peasants; and he desired to see the Cretan question settled in the one and only way which could satisfy everybody, but he had no illusions regarding the difficulty of getting that solution adopted.

The International Commission found the state of affairs in Crete intolerable. No State has ever been placed in a position so anomalous and complicated as was the autonomy which the Powers had conceded. The task imposed upon the High Commissioner was from the outset a very delicate one, and that the crisis, which in the circumstances was inevitable, did not occur at once was solely due to the nationality of Prince George of Greece. The situation was rendered impossible by the arbitrary action of the Consuls-General, who did not keep their action within strictly legal limits. Occasionally they exceeded their proper functions, and compromised the position of the High Commissioner and the Government and lowered their prestige, and at other times they addressed themselves directly to the advisers of the High Commissioner instead of to the Ministers of the Cretan Government. The conditions in which autonomy had been granted were such that the Consuls-General were in a position to give instructions to the Executive without the know-

ledge of the High Commissioner or the Government. There were many defects in the Constitution which had been passed into law by the first Cretan Assembly, and in 1906 it was much criticised by persons who had taken part in drawing it up. The many serious omissions which it was necessary to fill up were due to the unjustifiable optimism which prevailed when autonomy was given, and which engendered the belief that the period of transition would be a short one.

Law had formed a high opinion of the Muhamadans in Europe and in Asia, and he was convinced that it was essential for the prosperity of the island that the Muhamadan population should be induced to remain in Crete; he did not believe that it was possible to develop the agricultural resources of the island without them, and for this reason their presence was, in his eyes, essential to its prosperity. He was prepared, therefore, when he went to Crete, to lend his support to any rational project which would succeed in arresting the Muhamadan exodus. It was not unnatural that the Muhamadans should entertain doubts as to their security in the new state of things; and the information which they received from Constantinople, coloured by political prejudice, added to their uneasiness. The grievance which touched them the most was that concerned with the appointment of the Kadis; the latter refused to take the oath imposed upon all State officials. As this oath contains nothing which is contrary to the Moslem faith, the Cretan Government persisted in demanding it. On his side, the Shaikh-ul-Islam refused to authorise the Kadis to submit to this formality, and consequently the Mussulman section of the population was deprived of Kadis, and consequen-

tially of Imams, who are appointed by the Kadis, and thus was unable to fulfil the customary rites of religion. It must also be confessed that insufficient time had been allowed the Muhamadans thoroughly to master the new official language, and thus it was practically impossible for them to qualify themselves for the public service. This constituted a real and legitimate grievance. These two examples may serve to give some idea of the intricacy of the problems which were awaiting solution.

Law, of course, devoted special attention to the financial situation, which he set himself to study afresh, and for the second time. In order to put the island in a position to develop its natural resources, he came to the conclusion that some help from abroad was necessary, and the solution proposed by the Commission was a foreign loan of very modest proportions from the four protecting Powers. This proposal was accepted, and the loan promised, but to Law's chagrin never actually given; to the very end he persisted in attempting to secure the fulfilment of this promise, at least from his own Government; shortly before his death he went again on the same errand, saying to his wife—"I am going to the Foreign Office to remind them once more of their promise given to the Cretans for a loan which was never made. I know they hate me at the Foreign Office for boring them on the subject, but I can't help it, and I don't mind."

The recommendations of the International Commission upon the larger political issues were in harmony with Law's known views. His hope for the future was that on the expiration of the mandate of the then High Commissioner, Prince George of Greece, or in

the event of his resignation, the protecting Powers would entrust the King of the Hellenes with the nomination in their behalf of a new High Commissioner, on the understanding that His Majesty would remove and replace him on the demand of the Powers should he fail to maintain order, to observe the Constitution sanctioned by the Powers, or to fulfil the pledges given by them to the Muhamadan population. Law further contemplated that as soon as a new High Commissioner had been installed, and the organisation of a militia and reserve of gendarmerie been started on the lines suggested by the International Commission, the international troops might be withdrawn. An international guard might, if considered desirable, be left in charge of the Ottoman flag on the island in Suda Bay. These arrangements involved no technical change in the political status of the Great Island, but Law hoped that they might pave the way to eventual incorporation with the Greek kingdom. When at the very end of his life the international troops were being gradually withdrawn, he followed with poignant anxiety the progress of the withdrawal in the English papers, counting with satisfaction how few were left, and how soon all would have departed. He always believed that the labours of the Commission had brought the union of Crete with Greece appreciably nearer. He left for Athens, where Lady Law was awaiting him, with the hope that he had brought within measurable distance a solution which they both had so near at heart. Had he lived another three years the action of the protecting Powers, which postponed indefinitely the realisation of that hope, would have caused him intense suffering.

When the Laws returned to London they established themselves in a large flat in Wellesley House, in the sunniest part of London, carefully chosen for the sake of his southern wife, and it was here, surrounded by friends of many nationalities and of very diverse experience, he spent the last eighteen months of his life. Of this period his nephew, Major J. A. Henderson, writes:—

“His days were full. He did a good deal of work in the morning; attended to all his letters, and dictated many others; telephoned to all sorts of people on all sorts of subjects, and generally went into the City at about 11.30. On his way home in the evening he usually went into the ‘Rag,’ where he wrote letters or had a talk with some one whom he knew. He was on the committee there for some time, and always took a great interest in the club and its welfare. One of his greatest pleasures was to have two or three people to dinner, and I think he was at his best in the evening, for he loved to discuss subjects which interested him. He used to delight in Mr Garvin’s¹ company. Each of them held strong views, and each of them enjoyed expressing them. I have a vivid recollection of an evening at Wellesley House, when the company consisted of Sir Edward, Mr Garvin, and myself. The discussion began as we left the dinner-table. Mr Garvin walked up and down and declaimed. Sir Edward sat still and declaimed. Neither of them appeared to pay any attention to what the other said, and if there was any danger of the thread of speech being broken, it was remedied by shouting. This had been going on for a long time,

¹ Mr J. L. Garvin, the Editor of ‘The Observer.’

when they both suddenly and simultaneously turned on me and inquired why I did not join in the conversation. Before I had time to explain that it was not my idea of a conversation, they had begun again, and in the end I do not know which of them had enjoyed himself the most."

Fortunately it is possible to record the impression which Mr Garvin himself carried away from these evenings of tumultuous talk. Among his many and exhausting preoccupations he has found time to put on record in the next chapter his reminiscences of a friend whose loss, as he said in 'The Observer,' made life seem a poorer and a chiller thing.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

BY J. L. GARVIN.

I. A PERSONALITY.

SIR EDWARD used to say that "personality is everything in the East," and is it not in reality as dominant in the West, where on a superficial view so much more seems to depend on systems and less on men? Even upon those who had known many of the most remarkable men of their time in various countries during the last generation, the personality of the subject of this memoir stamped a strong impression. It was felt even in the few minutes' conversation of a first encounter, and it never ceased to deepen afterwards. A powerful and original character set a seal of its own upon the reflections and reminiscences prompted by an experience of extraordinary range. Contact with that character and mind was always like reading in a living volume with chapters as various as many, and with decisive thought and full substance on every page. As will be shown later on, it was a volume like no other. You never consulted

it without fresh instruction. You felt that no one had read to the end. When a mind of that kind vanishes and takes with it a special knowledge of men and things in many nations, and an individual view that no one now living can communicate, there is a singular sense of irretrievable loss, as for the drowning of Prospero's book.

Perhaps since every life is in some wise unique, we have more or less of that feeling when any life we have known directly or indirectly drops into the still abyss. We all had that feeling when the late Lord Acton died, carrying with him the vast erudition that might have afforded matter for a library of unwritten books. Sir Edward Law's case was of quite an opposite kind. It was his confession, and in a way his pride, that he read little. Works of reference and official papers, statistics of all kinds,—these being the raw material of thought and often of action,—he pointed at with a mingling of ironic approbation and humorous contempt. To literature of any sort, especially to what is called political literature, he hardly attended. When he did read, his sense of form, notably in what concerns the order and lucidity of prose, was exceptionally good. But he had gathered his harvests another way. His immense practical experience in all parts of Europe and the East often seems a lost treasure in extent not unlike Lord Acton's book-learning, though so different in kind. This directness of his knowledge and judgment of life played a main part in the impression of force, of managing capacity, of promptitude, combined with great reserves of power, which his character created.

My acquaintance with Sir Edward Law was con-

fined to the last few years of his career, after his return from India. My purpose is to give some account of his connection with the Tariff Reform movement and of his attitude towards foreign affairs. To Mr Chamberlain's cause he rendered services not yet fully appreciated. On foreign policy his views were none the less coherent and interesting because they differed decisively from the trend of the day. It is necessary to say that upon the first subject we agreed perfectly, or almost so; upon the second, not. It was a rare privilege for some of us, one of the chief pleasures and advantages these latter years have afforded, to discuss in this way with calmness and candour, "nor disagreeing except in opinion," the state of international affairs. In these long talks Sir Edward Law opened the large stores of his mind, and often thought aloud. Only for the sake of throwing light upon the temperament which made him equally lovable and authoritative do I say for my part that while our friendship was founded upon similarity of view about Tariff Reform—about its proper limits, as well as its vital necessity—the more we differed afterwards about foreign policy, the firmer was the bond. An affection grew up rapidly. Every wise man knows that searching conversation of this kind between those who diverge in view but remain very much at one in mood, is a sure as well as a rare source of mental clearness and refreshment. But we began by saying that Sir Edward Law was above all things a personality. We must say something more of the man if we are to follow the economist and politician through the last phases of his work and influence.

To say that he was Irish is to say both much and

little. It is usually forgotten that Ireland, with its strange mixture of Iberian, Celtic, and Teutonic blood, includes the widest variety of influences, types, and temperaments the most opposite. What they have in common is fervour, more evident and expansive in the South, more compressed and underlying in the North. When that fervour is well under control it turns to a formidable power: it adds sustained energy to concentrated purpose. We need not dilate upon this. Enough to say that Sir Edward FitzGerald Law, with something of the Celtic South in his temperament and all of the North in his will, was an Irishman of the born governing order, hard and masterful in action, fearing no responsibility, yet able to show himself, whenever he pleased, a safe and dexterous tactician, audacious in instinct, prudent in method, and yet full of emotional strength, of passionate possibilities, and of all manner of great-heartedness. He was that redoubtable thing the Calvinist, the Covenanter, who is also a romanticist—a combination more frequent in kind than is generally thought, but found in him with a degree of intensity rare indeed. His face and tone were stern and disciplined, yet no good observer could mistake for a moment the depths of kindness and feeling that lay below, or the force of the temperamental vigour held in determined restraint.

He was to this extent an embodied paradox, like others among the most interesting characters. He constantly reminded one of the great passage in a famous book of Arabian travel describing well-digging in the desert when solid rock must be broken through to get at the water. In the same way the emotional and romantic elements flowed underneath the stern

surface of his manner. If this illustration does not explain his magnetism, I cannot hope to suggest it. His habitual manner of speech was abrupt and emphatic, and when he was very earnest about an opinion, he had a very characteristic way of trumpeting it tersely like a military word of command. Far away from army routine as his career had led, the soldier was always at the bottom of him. Neither in speech nor writing had he a particle of rhetoric. Decided as were his sympathies and prejudices, his businesslike incisive analysis of a problem was the method of a mind which rarely deceived itself and studied political realities in a dry light. He could face the facts that he disliked.

His pithy elliptical style of speaking was sometimes enforced by an indicating gesture which was as explanatory as a whole volume of comment. Agreeing with Goethe that one must be hammer or anvil, he divided men, especially public men, into two classes—those who had the power of getting their way or a great deal of it, and those who were devoid of that quality. An instance not easy to forget was at the opening of the Bosnian crisis. From the beginning, as we shall see, Sir Edward regarded with profound misgiving the whole handling of that crisis by the British Government, and he was convinced that the Foreign Office did not understand Count Aehrenthal. The Austrian statesman, it will be remembered, was at that time much less known than he has since become; but Sir Edward Law knew him well, and never doubted that he would put through at any cost the business of the annexation. Holding up his clenched hand as though it were a mailed fist indeed, Sir Edward would say again and again: "Aehrenthal has *that*." It was constantly his test for

men in authority. Either they had *that* and would probably prevail, or they had it not and were likely to succumb. As good psychologists have before remarked, we often paint ourselves by the qualities we praise in others or by our way of doing it. It was so with Sir Edward Law. He was assuredly among those who had *that*. He had the dominating gift. When he discussed politics, whether home, Imperial, or foreign, he discussed them in terms of action. Abstract speculation he dismissed. His question was ever, "What ought to be done?"—and he was nothing if not definite and resolute, though too shrewd by nature and too well acquainted with the methods of diplomacy in many lands not to understand how to employ on occasion the tone of almost neutral statement and the art of gradual approach. Hence he was successful in every administrative charge committed to him, and I cannot well imagine any task of Government in which he would have failed.

II. INFLUENCE ON THE TARIFF MOVEMENT.

By the aid, however imperfect, of these rapid touches of personal reminiscence, we can now better understand Sir Edward Law's part in the Tariff Reform movement. When it began he held one of the most important posts of its kind in the world. As Finance Minister in India, he was Chancellor of the Exchequer to 300,000,000 of people. He was head of a Treasury always in a state of delicate equilibrium, and requiring from the Finance Minister far more personal skill than is usually needed or possessed by Chancellors of the Exchequer at home. Distinguished as his previous career had been, he was

as yet better known to a few statesmen and departmental officials and to some Eastern Governments and peoples than to public opinion at home. His chance to leave a mark—and no passing mark—upon the thought of the Empire as a whole came as it were sideways.

On May 15, 1903, Mr Chamberlain delivered his epoch-making speech at Birmingham. The Board of Trade was thrown into a state of unprecedented activity. On every side new Blue-books and returns were demanded. There was a volcanic eruption of statistics and reports. The Government of India, Lord Curzon being then Viceroy,—with Sir Edward Law, as we have said, Finance Minister,—were asked for their opinion upon the tariff proposals. The inquiry was momentous. India contains three-fourths of the population of the Empire, and a fifth of the human race. Next to the United Kingdom it is the most important economic unit under the British flag. For export purposes it is the chief of our markets. For import purposes it is high on the list. Its potentialities of economic development are immense. We deny it the fiscal autonomy conceded to every self-governing dominion. We may defend that course and try to persist in it—with political results that sooner or later will be disastrous—but let us not deceive ourselves as to the strictly despotic character of the fiscal compulsion we impose on India. An overwhelming weight of public opinion in that country, amongst natives and Anglo-Indians alike, holds that the system of forced free trade we have riveted upon India sacrifices its internal development and the welfare of her people to the supposed interests of Lancashire.

Few who are acquainted with the change in the whole mental atmosphere of existence in the East believe that

the present fiscal relations between India and the United Kingdom can permanently remain unmodified. Every one admits that if the question were determined by an Indian view of Indian interests, the tariff policy of that empire within an empire would soon imitate the fiscal systems of Canada and Australia, the United States and Japan. The problem is vital and complex. No scheme for promoting Imperial unity by tariff partnerships and preferential trade can exclude India or can fail to reckon fully with its present commercial position, and with its inevitable claims in the future.

The home request in 1903 for a considered opinion was answered by the Indian Government in the well-known despatch on "Preferential Tariffs" (Blue-book ed. 1931, 1904). It covered a far longer and more important document in the shape of a separate Minute by the Financial Member of Council. The foundation even for the collective part of the despatch signed by Lord Curzon and his "Cabinet" was supplied by Sir Edward Law. The result was necessarily a compromise, and the official despatch in its final form did not please him. It was a very cautious performance. It did not encourage Mr Chamberlain's preferential policy; but it did not attempt to advocate free imports as an unvarying principle; it suggested that greater freedom on the part of India to retaliate "would be attended with beneficial results." Of a very different character was the accompanying minute by Sir Edward Law. He was recognised—to quote the tribute paid to him by Sir Roger Lethbridge—as "the first living Anglo-Indian expert" upon commerce and finance. His minute was full and masterly. It remains an economic study of permanent value, and, as we have said, it is certain to exercise

sooner or later a strong influence upon the remodelling of Indian fiscal policy.

Sir Edward brushed aside all doctrinaire views. He understood the free-trade theory perfectly. Like every other sane person, he admitted that universal free exchange will probably be a convenient and inevitable system when all nations have reached an equal level of economic development. Even then superiority of political organisation—if all the world's commerce were an open field—might enable some governments and nations to secure a disproportionate share of advantage from a nominal equality of conditions. But we are remote from the time when the manufacturing as well as the agricultural resources of all countries will be organised on something like the same scale of completeness and efficiency. At present universal free competition as between more developed, less developed, and undeveloped nations would be a sort of free competition between the pike and the carp. So much for the free-trade theory considered with reference to existing circumstances and future possibilities. Sir Edward Law troubled himself little about points of speculation. For him the decisive facts of the economic world to-day were the total absence of free exchange and the impossibility of securing it. You may believe in the abolition of armaments, but if battleships exist you cannot fight them by pacifical resolutions. You may believe in the abolition of tariffs, but if tariffs actually exist they are powerful instruments, and you cannot fight them by a passive and negative doctrine like that of Cobdenism, which implies submission as a matter of course to any conditions of exchange, no matter how unequal, that foreign countries like to impose. On the other hand,

tariffs when adopted may be either good or bad. A given average rate of duties might be too high for one country, too weak for another.

Sir Edward Law thought the fiscal policies both of the United Kingdom and India were too feeble. He believed that extreme protection in the United States had served its purpose and had ceased to be sound. He knew intimately the commercial conditions of Russia, and was convinced that protection in that country had been exaggerated beyond all sense and reason. He held the tariff practice of Germany to represent the easiest and most scientific adjustment with which he was acquainted of national fiscal policy to the actual economic conditions of the modern world. In this spirit of vigorous discrimination the well-known minute was written. It will be better to quote a few passages, not from the official Blue-book itself, but from the original draft representing Sir Edward's personal view:—

“The United Kingdom is the only country which hitherto has steadfastly adhered to free trade principles. The principles of free trade are sufficiently established and admitted, whilst the results of adherence to these principles in existing circumstances are a subject of discussion which it is here unnecessary to enter into beyond taking note of the fact, that whilst free trade in imports depends on the will of the importing nation, free trade in exports depends on the will of the nation receiving them. In other words, free trade between two countries can only be secured by consent of both; and in this respect the United Kingdom enjoys only a one-sided free trade. In this connection, I may state that there appears to be a

growing tendency towards protectionism in England, displayed, for instance, in the pressure put on the Secretary of State to give preference to English manufacturers for the supply of locomotive and railway material."

The argument passes on to analyse Indian conditions—

"The actual system prevailing in India to-day (1903) is neither pure free trade as it is understood by its doctrinaire votaries, nor fair trade nor protection. . . . Fair trade has not been adopted as a principle in India, although we recently made a small step in that direction when, by negotiation with France, we secured better terms for the importation of our coffee into that country, by making some concessions in the duties charged on the importation of one or two articles of French production into India."

As Mr Chamberlain's system contemplated a relatively low scale of home duties even on foreign manufacture (the rates imposed were to work out at an average of 10 per cent), and as the vital aim of Imperial preference was the development of exchange under the flag by free trade between the western country and the oversea dominions and dependencies, Sir Edward Law regarded this plan as a scheme of fair trade, as far from protection proper as from doctrinaire Cobdenism. Sir Edward's clear contempt for abstract syllogisms in this matter, and the practical bent of his mind, like its executive decision, are well illustrated in another passage—

"Fair trade, as I understand it, is a system of reciprocity which, I take it, means in practice being prepared to put a sufficiently high duty on some or all

of the imports from another country with which trading transactions are large, to check or even stop certain of such imports unless that country makes some concession in tariff rates on these articles of export, the trade in which is threatened by the duties they have imposed or intend imposing. Fair trade requires keen bargaining in commercial treaties, and that such keen bargaining may be successful, it is absolutely necessary that the negotiator should be thoroughly versed in the conditions affecting trade in each individual article which he has to consider, alike with reference to his own country and those of the country with which he is negotiating. As an instance, I may point out that while in negotiating with Russia it might be practical politics to press for a reduction in duties on Birmingham goods, it would be useless to ask for a reduction on Manchester shirtings or prints. The amount of capital sunk in cotton mills in Russia is so large, that any serious competition with their trade would produce a widespread industrial and probably financial crisis which she could not afford to risk."

His maxim is "Discriminate, discriminate," and any thoughtful free trader, like Professor Marshall, would admire the spirit of the following analysis—

"The evident dangers of protection are—(1) That weak Governments accord it too freely and beyond the reasonable interests of protection against competition from foreign rivals, and thus encourage over-production with its resulting industrial and financial crises.

"(2) That protection may be accorded to industries for which local circumstances are by nature too unfavourable to permit of the growth of healthy business.

"The United States have thriven under a system of

absolute protection. Germany was certainly thriving until three years ago, but since then there have been failures and difficulties which some may attribute to an undue system of protection, although so many factors in the situation have to be taken into consideration that, whether correct or not, I do not believe that the proportion is susceptible of proof. Russia has collapsed industrially and commercially under a system of protection, and in my opinion the collapse is due to protection having been given in the most unreasonable manner to encourage the establishment of industries for which local conditions were absolutely unfavourable, and to the exaggeration of protection to accelerate the growth of other industries which might in due time have prospered, but have been forced into an unhealthy hot-house growth leading to premature decay.¹

“The experience of these three countries does not appear to afford satisfactory evidence either of the universal utility of protection or of its universal harmfulness.”

The Finance Minister's own conclusions were at that time very cautious. Clearly sympathising with the principle of Imperial preference, he did not see in it much probability of appreciable gain for India. He thought even then, however, that the idea might be applied in a way which would not prejudice India, and would yet be of distinct advantage to the United Kingdom. But at this stage he was not in full possession of Mr Chamberlain's views. The later pronouncements of the Tariff Reform leaders convinced him

¹ Sir Edward Law, we need hardly say, lived to perceive and admire the completeness with which Germany recovered from the *krach* of 1901. Subsequent experience has modified this view.

that "India would gain more by a preferential tariff than appeared to be offered at the date when the Government of India's despatch enclosing my Minute was written."

When his official career was closed and he returned to London, the tariff agitation was in full swing. He soon threw himself into it heart and soul. The prestige of his name was an important addition, and his force of character stimulated all who came in contact with him. The whole cast of his mind, at once resolute and prudent, helped the movement to acquire the steady vigour which impelled it after the first burst of enthusiasm had been succeeded by a more sober and a harder temper. As one who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in a sub-empire of 300,000,000 of people, and who was thoroughly acquainted with the details of finance and trade in many countries, he could himself have framed the tariff that Mr Chamberlain's followers desired. One of the greatest services Sir Edward Law ever rendered was in the masterly letter in which, by an old hand in fiscal negotiations, he exposed once for all some popular fallacies upon the subject of the "most favoured nation" clause. Since—it was said—we enjoyed the benefit of all the concessions that protectionist countries made to each other,—why worry about retaliating or even negotiating ourselves? Sir Edward showed why such concessions affect little or not at all the lines of trade in which Britain is more particularly interested—for instance, the very highest quality of textile stuffs and metal wares. The tariff reductions granted to each other by protectionist countries apply very largely to branches of trade in which we do not compete at all. The advantages we gain by the "most favoured nation"

clause are incidental, haphazard, and limited. Other countries in bargaining with each other think of their own interests, not of ours. Not only is that the case. Protectionist countries in negotiating with each other must take British competitive power into account, and necessarily adjust any arrangement likely to give us some increased advantage under the "most favoured nation" clause in such a manner as to keep that advantage at a minimum. If we want for our manufacturers, our workers and their goods, the best possible terms of admission to foreign markets, we can only get these terms by direct intervention and by using our power of retaliation to tax, penalise, or exclude those by whom we are taxed, penalised, and excluded.

Again, upon the question of including India in our comprehensive scheme of Imperial preference, Sir Edward Law spoke with unrivalled authority. After stating the conditions of Indian trade under the present system, he wrote as follows:—

"The result of such conditions is highly prejudicial to the development of Indian industry, though quite profitable to the importers of India's raw produce. It is not in the interest of protective countries that Indian manufacturing industry should develop; it suits such countries much better to confine the population of India to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water to the manufacturers abroad. It seems to me imperative that serious efforts should be made to change this situation in the interest of nascent Indian industries, which, with fair opportunity, are susceptible of immense development, to the great advantage of the Indian peoples. My conclusion is that India urgently requires a free hand for the protection of existing export

trade by tariff reprisals whenever that trade may be assailed by the hostile fiscal policy of other countries. Also that while there would be little immediate direct gain in participating in a policy of Imperial preference, the essential legitimate development of Indian manufacturing industries could best be obtained by participation in an Imperial system of preferential tariffs."

These words stand on record and keep their weight. They have given new momentum to the reasoned demand for a complete reconsideration of the fiscal system which puts a bitter argument into the mouth of every enemy of our rule in India. Sir Edward Law's Introduction to Mr M. de P. Webb's valuable book, 'India and the Empire,' was his last important contribution to this question. We must quote from it somewhat more at length—

"Why should we not take advantage of our Imperial position, and by scientific organisation and combination make the most of the vast resources of the Empire which, whether as regards demand, materials, labour, or capital, are when combined unrivalled and beyond competition? It is from this Imperial point of view that India stands pre-eminently first among the component parts of the British Empire, and it is from this same point of view that Mr Webb, after a detailed study of Indian resources and trade, proceeds to show how India could most advantageously take her place in a system of Imperial preference."

He proceeds to show that Governments and nations when refused free trade by others must keep and use a free hand—

"If India sells more in quantity of raw produce or more in value of manufactured or half-manufactured

goods, whether in the United Kingdom or in other countries, she will be able to import more British merchandise. To sell greater quantities, or higher-priced products in foreign markets, she must boldly enforce her rights to freer trade with such foreign markets by a policy of retaliation against the countries which deny her freedom of trade in those articles which she can produce cheaply and advantageously. Free trade is an ideal which India cannot obtain without the consent of the foreign nations trading with her. They are perfectly justified in taking measures to prohibit freedom of trade, if they consider it to be to their advantage so to do; but India is equally justified in taking measures to force them to reconsider the situation and to find their profit in according to her a larger measure of free trade."

He goes on to give some forcible illustrations of the power of retaliation—

"I will cite examples of what can be done. In Russia tariff regulations give a preference to Chinese over Indian tea. India is an important market for Russian petroleum. If Russia were threatened with an Indian customs tariff discriminating against her petroleum, she would find it to her advantage to accord greater freedom of trade to Indian tea. If German manufacturers were threatened with a discriminating duty in India, Germany would modify her present tariff, which is practically prohibitory to the importation from India of such articles as jute manufactures, cleaned rice, &c. The obstructive or prohibitory tariffs of the United States and France might be similarly met, with similar results. All these countries have employed experts to frame scientific tariffs in support of their respective

individual interests. They are always ready to modify these tariffs when other countries take measures to nullify their advantages."

Sir Edward proceeded to ask whether we do not by our present attitude justify the Swadeshi movement and wilfully add fuel to the flame of political unrest. He maintained that the Government of India, when he was a member of it, had practically declared for a policy of retaliation in the Despatch of October 22, 1903, founded upon his own Minute. He concluded in these emphatic words—

"It remains for the Home Government which may introduce tariff reform to formulate such proposals as will justify India in accepting also the policy of Imperial preference. And such proposals can be formulated."

In June 1908 Sir Edward Law was proposed as a member of the Tariff Commission. Mr Chamberlain in a very laudatory and cordial letter suggested the nomination. At a meeting of the Commission, Sir Edward was co-opted by a unanimous and enthusiastic vote. In subsequent conversations with the present writer he repeatedly discussed the question of how a tariff might be most practically framed and carried through the House of Commons. His mind was deeply engaged upon this subject up to a few months before his death, when the Turkish revolution broke out, and Balkan affairs completely absorbed him.

It only remains to add a very few words upon his other activities in connection with national finance and commercial organisation. He played a very prominent part in the movement for larger gold reserves which agitated banking circles in 1907. The whole trend of national finance filled him with misgiving. He thought

we had begun to sap the economic basis on which the commercial greatness of this country had been reared. For political and fiscal reasons combined we seemed to be coming to a unique condition of low interest with bad security. Upon the whole, invested capital seems to be less secure as capital than in any other important country whether in Europe or elsewhere; yet even the rate of return was reduced in every way by fiscal inequality, by labour demands, above all by the abuse of direct taxation. He regarded death-duties as anticipated income-tax. Reckless process of depleting and expelling capital would arrest the growth of employment and wages, and would thus defeat what ought to be our main objects. If to this ex-Minister of Finance the methods pursued by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Treasury would have appeared to be those of a perilous and audacious amateur, upon the other hand, he heartily admired the constructive vigour displayed by Mr Lloyd George on the Board of Trade. For many years he had advocated the reconstruction of the Port of London Authority, the equal application of the load-line to foreign ships in British ports, and the principle embodied in the Patents Act. These latter, in his view, were sound tariff reform measures. We may say of him that he combined admirably, perhaps better than any one else, the mental temper of the older school of economists with many of the opinions of the newer.

III. OPINIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY.

It is impossible to give an equally coherent account of Sir Edward Law's attitude during the last years of his life towards foreign policy. To prevent misunder-

standing of what follows, it must be said clearly at the outset that the present writer was in frank disagreement with many of the views we have now to record. The conversations turning upon that considered disagreement were none the less friendly, and all the more interesting. In this sphere Sir Edward was emphatically of an older school. He distrusted the "newer course" of thought and policy during the last ten years, and retained the opinions held by most men of his class before the Armenian massacres. He thought that when we backed the Turk we had put our money on the right horse. He still thought, in spite of the Manchurian war, that the growth of the power of Russia would ultimately prove to be the greatest danger to British interests in the Balkans, in Persia, and in India alike. He still regarded Germany as the strongest check upon Russia, and as the surest guarantee for the integrity of the Ottoman empires.

Like some of us who take a totally different view of the relative position of the Powers, and who are absurdly called anti-German in consequence, Sir Edward was full of admiration for German qualities of mind and heart. He was irritated and alarmed by recent developments of German policy, but he still believed that England and Germany ought to come together in order to restrain Russia permanently, and to defend and develop Turkey. Hence he was a very decided and active advocate of British co-operation with Germany in the construction of the Baghdad Railways.

Singular as this system of ideas may seem to most of those who believe with the present writer that recent German policy is a mortal danger to this country, and that, on the other hand, the interests of England and

Russia are perfectly capable of permanent adjustment,—it was from its own point of view consistent. Sir Edward sympathised not only with Constantinople and Berlin against St Petersburg, but with Athens against Sofia. The rest followed. He maintained that friendship with Turkey, in view of the importance to the British Empire of the seventy millions and more of Moslems in India and Egypt, was far and away the most vital interest of our foreign policy. Next to that he put friendship with Greece, a nation of traders and sailors, whose attachment to us might prove in the long run the best support of our naval power in the Mediterranean. He put third in importance the contention that everything ought to be done to bring about an amicable adjustment between England and Germany. My objection was of course that such a scheme of policy would force both Russia and France to compromise with Germany at our expense, but this did not convince him.

He knew Russia and the Balkans like the palm of his hand. He maintained that Russia would again become really as well as nominally a gigantic Power. Already her population is over 165,000,000. In another half decade it will be 180,000,000. Ten years hence it will be 200,000,000. The influences making for the slackening of increase in the Western communities (including the United States and Australia) can only come into play much later for the Empire of the Tsars. The weakness of the colossal dominion lay, he thought, in the want of homogeneity among its population and in the superior education and intelligence of the non-Russian races. Upon the other hand, the Manchurian struggle was no fair test. If Russia mobilised for a European war, Sir Edward thought her population to be so vast and its

increase so rapid, that she could continue to draw indefinitely for military purposes on that inexhaustible human reservoir, and yet her economic life, or at least her agricultural life, would go on. Again, if the non-Russian races are superior in mind, not so in character. Racially, the North Russian stock—and of that alone there are perhaps 70,000,000—rest upon a hard Turanian basis. It is the same with the Bulgar and the Turk. Wherever you find the Turanian substratum, said Sir Edward, you find something in its nature formidable. If the inevitable growth of the Russian population is bound, as he thought, to become sooner or later the greatest of all dangers to Germany as well as to Turkey and the British dominion in India, we can now understand how from this standpoint a naval policy challenging to England might well appear a fatal mistake on the part of Germany.

Whatever else may be thought of these opinions, no one can deny that they have those merits of independence and originality which belonged to all the workings of Sir Edward Law's mind. He was accordingly a strong supporter of the Baghdad Railway scheme, for reasons which made others distrust it. It would not only clamp the Ottoman Empire together: it would bridle the ultimate Russian danger—the "Tartar peril," as he called it—in a way for which the West would one day be grateful. Apart from international politics, Sir Edward thought the Baghdad Railway a splendid and civilising enterprise in itself. That was, indeed, the strong point of his position. Looking over a few scattered notes, one finds some other opinions well worthy of passing mention. He had no doubt about the future of the yellow race. Considering its extreme

thrift, its tirelessness, its marvellous dexterity of touch and accuracy of eye, he thought that an immense industrial force was bound to be developed in the Far East, though physical obstacles, mountain barriers, and wide deserts would probably prevent it for generations at least from becoming an armed and invading terror to the West.

As to the state of Turkey under Abdul Hamid, Sir Edward Law was under no illusions. He foresaw that the situation was untenable, though not how change would come. In March 1908 he submitted to the late Lord Glenesk a remarkable memorandum outlining a practical scheme of autonomy for Macedonia. Why, he asked, had the project of reforming in Armenia come to nothing years before? "They fizzled out because they were elaborated on unsuitable and impracticable European lines by ignorant European ambassadors knowing nothing of the Turkish administrative system and having no administrative experience." In Macedonia it would be "criminal lunacy to repeat the same folly." Sir Edward proposed for Macedonia a limited autonomy under a Mohammedan Governor ("Old Turk"), closely supervised by the Powers. If his services during his term of office were satisfactory to the Powers, the Governor was to be entitled to a pension of £2000 on final retirement. He was to be assisted by European advisers, with complete powers of inspection in every branch. A gendarmerie recruited from all Turkish races and sects was to be under a European Inspector-General, with control of the jails. Turkish troops were to be confined to agreed garrison posts, and were to be limited in numbers to a fixed maximum. But we need not go into the further details of this scheme.

In a few months after it was prepared the old order in Turkey had ceased to exist. The Revolution had broken out, and Sir Edward Law did not live to see the reaction which he anticipated. The crisis shortened his days, and it is probable that no one in this country was more deeply moved by the turn of events. Bulgaria declared its independence as a kingdom. Count Aehrenthal proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Cretans voted union with Greece, but Greece remained quiet, with a self-restraint scantily rewarded in the sequel. From his knowledge of Count Aehrenthal, Sir Edward Law was convinced that Vienna would face war rather than recede from the annexation of the occupied Provinces. He was certain that no good could be done by countenancing the natural fury of the Serbs or by encouraging them to commit national suicide by throwing themselves across the path of Austria-Hungary. In a word, he saw from the beginning that British policy was bound to fail. The times were changed. For all his sympathy with the cause of freedom and progress in the Ottoman Empire and with the Turks as a race, Sir Edward Law dreaded by instinct the doctrinaire extremism of the revolutionaries, and he was sure from the outset that Turkish affairs would be more wisely and safely guided through perilous and difficult years of transition if the old Turks had been maintained in office under the restored Constitution. In this respect the lessons of the last three years have vindicated only too completely the soundness of his judgment. His sternness and kindness were combined in his character, he united an indomitable love of England, a pride of patriotism, with wide and warm sympathies towards other nations and races. If he

placed the maintenance of Empire above all other causes, he would also have asked his countrymen with his last breath to remember their immense responsibilities in the Mohammedan sphere, and never to forget their traditional sympathy with Greece. Right or wrong, there was upon all he felt and thought and did the stamp of character; and to those who knew him the world's stock of character will always seem poorer for his loss.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAW's life in London was perhaps the happiest period of his eventful career. Long compressed by the strict rules of Government service, he enjoyed his liberty like a boy. He was not less gratified than surprised to find how widely the good work he had done for the Empire was appreciated in England. The note which he had written for the Government of India upon Tariff Reciprocity, and which was published with the official despatch, had been coldly received in Simla, but it had been hailed by tariff reformers in England and the Colonies with delight and admiration. Mr Deakin had cited it at the Colonial Conference of 1907 as a model of the way in which the question of preference should be handled. "What is valuable" (in this Memorandum), said the eloquent advocate of Colonial Preference, "is the manner in which the relation of India to each country is treated. It is handled precisely as we endeavour to handle each proposal for a new Customs duty—either its increase or its decrease—but here it is treated in relation to the possibilities of retaliation. Each country that trades with India is taken separately; the *quantum* of the trade is given; the subject-matter of that trade is considered; and the trade from India to that country is considered. The memorandum exhibits

exactly the method in which in the Commonwealth we endeavour to approach any such proposals. Sir Edward Law complains of the deficiency of his materials, and speaks tentatively, just as one would do under the circumstances, but what is pertinent in this particular connection is his study of export and import trade and its character and possibilities on both sides. This represents a business-like way of disposing of questions of this kind, exhaustive, having regard to the business in hand, so that I have taken the opportunity of quoting it as a better illustration than any statement of the way in which we try to handle such matters.”¹ On his return to Australia, in the same year, Mr Deakin wrote even more emphatically. Law had put before him certain considerations regarding India, to which the Australian Prime Minister replied as follows :—

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PRIME MINISTER.

Sept. 18, '7.

DEAR SIR,—I have read your letter with the greatest interest, and appreciate the scrupulous reasonableness and practical character of your criticism of the position of India. I repeat again that this is the essentially sound method of treatment which I hope to see applied to all proposals for preference in each country affected.—Thanking you for your courtesy, I am, yours very truly,

(Signed) ALFRED DEAKIN.

Sir E. FG. LAW, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.

Mr Deakin's admiration for Law's memorandum was shared by the leaders of the tariff reform movement in

¹ Minutes of Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1907 [Cd. 3523], pp. 236, 237.

this country. Mr Joseph Chamberlain, without waiting for an introduction, asked him down to Highbury, "a very characteristically English way of going to business," as Lady Law thought; and many other members of the party sought his advice. Law, indeed, was able to contribute to his Unionist friends a practical knowledge of tariffs such as few English politicians possessed. Their political opponents had taunted them with the impossibility of drawing up a preferential tariff, and Law's serious and weighty illustration of how it could actually be done in India was both opportune and welcome. To Law himself, who to the end was modest at heart, though positive in manner, this recognition was very pleasant after the discouraging reception of his proposals in India. "There," he said, "they had begun to make me fear I was a greater fool than I supposed."

His confidence in himself was justified by the practical success which he achieved in making an income. After having been left by the Government "on the streets," as he used to say, at the age of sixty, he had succeeded, in eighteen months, in building up an income of £2500, and this income he might, by perfectly honourable means, have doubled, had not his uncompromising code of honour forbidden him to do things which thoroughly honest men of business do not scruple to do. He knew himself that he might have made a fortune from Greece by means to which no exception could be taken, but he always refused. "I do not want," he used to say to Lady Law, "to make a franc out of your country." Mons. de Raffolovitch, who had exceptional opportunities for judging of the chances which were offered him in earlier years by his official connection with

Greece, declared: "Il est resté pauvre parce qu'il l'a voulu. Il aurait pu être, honnêtement, plusieurs fois millionnaire." Law was undoubtedly gratified at his success in making some money for himself, and he looked forward with satisfaction to the prospect of making more. Few people, it is true, had less regard for money than he had. He had no personal extravagances; if he had money, he spent it; if he had not, he went without it. But he was not inappreciative of the comforts which money can procure. He liked and appreciated to the full a good flat, good furniture, and a good cook, but he could have been quite happy without any of these things, were it not that his thoughts were always governed by an intense desire for his wife's comfort.

If in the midst of this free and active life he had one reason for serious concern, it was on the score of his health. When he left India the doctors had insisted upon the absolute necessity of rest; but this was a luxury in which he never would indulge, even could he have afforded it; circumstanced as he was, prolonged rest was out of the question. He had from time to time premonitory indications of the heart trouble which in the end proved fatal. In the midst of the gayest conversation he would sometimes be obliged to stop suddenly, transfixed by a spasm of pain. But whether these grave warnings ever caused him secret apprehension we have no means of knowing, for he kept all thoughts upon this subject rigorously to himself. By the summer of 1908, however, the gravity of his illness could no longer be gainsaid: he went to France and underwent a course of treatment for two months, but the painful symptoms continued to recur

with increasing frequency and intensity. None the less he decided to return to England to resume his work; but he was in truth a dying man, and it was only his indomitable spirit which drove him along. In October he went to Paris on business, and there his much-tried constitution gave way, and after a brief illness, during which his wife never left his bedside, he died on 3rd November.

As soon as the news of his death was published, King George of Greece, who was at that time in Paris, wrote to Lady Law in terms of touching sympathy, and informed her that he was telegraphing to his Government expressing the wish that Law should be given at his funeral the honours of a Grand Cross of the Saviour, a decoration which had been offered to him, but which he had been obliged to decline. From all quarters Lady Law received the most signal testimony of the regard felt for her husband. The late King Edward's sympathy was expressed in the following telegram from Sandringham:—

“The King sends you his deepest sympathy on the death of your distinguished husband, whom His Majesty has known for so many years. The King will be represented at the funeral at Athens. His Majesty would also have been represented at the Memorial Service in Paris had he known it was going to be held there.”

Queen Alexandra also telegraphed the following message:—

“Let me express to you my most heartfelt and deepest sympathy in what must be to you a most crushing blow

and overwhelming sorrow—the loss of your precious and distinguished husband, whom all who knew him mourn with you. May God give you strength to bear this heaviest of sorrow.

ALEXANDRA.”

Of the numberless letters which Lady Law received, then and afterwards, only two can be quoted here. The first is from the Superintendent at Wellesley House, and serves to show the warmth of affection which Law’s rich human nature inspired in all with whom he was brought into contact. After thanking Lady Law for sundry small gifts, the writer went on to say: “At the same time I take the liberty of thanking you in this way, on behalf of the Porter and myself, for the many kindnesses received in the past at the hands of Sir Edward and yourself. I hope you will pardon my saying it, but the very sad loss you sustained was bitterly felt by all the subordinates here in the loss of a great friend; as Sir Edward, in his kindness of heart, had endeared himself to every one who had the pleasure to serve him. The expressions of regret and visible signs of sorrows felt can never be conveyed to you in the space of a short letter; suffice it to say that on the receipt of the news of your bereavement the whole of the dependents here with one consent seemed to realise your sad loss, and in their aspect seemed to make it their own.

“I trust, mi-lady, that you will excuse my addressing you at such length, but I owe so much to the late Sir Edward that I cannot refrain from giving expression to what is in my mind before you leave.

“I beg to sign myself your ladyship’s humble obed^t serv^t”

C. DAY.”

The second letter is from a very different source, and consists of an appreciation of Law from the felicitous pen of Mons. André Chevrillon. After recounting the occasions on which he had had an opportunity of studying the work of Lady Law's husband, this gifted interpreter of English life continues:—

“Je n'ai vu, malheureusement, Sir Edward qu'à intervalles bien espacées, depuis nos belles promenades à cheval, en 1895, sur les dunes de Beyrout et le long des eaux courantes de Damas; il m'a laissé surtout le souvenir d'un caractère et d'une figure. Ce souvenir que je ne puis fixer à ses faits précis n'est guère qu'une impression, mais elle est profonde. J'ignore quelles étaient exactement ses origines de race; mais on y devinait une proportion notable de l'élément celtique. Son esprit—*wit*, au sens profond du mot, celui qu'on lui donne en parlant d'un Meredith, celui que Meredith lui-même entendait lorsqu'il a peint sa *Diana of the Crossways*—son esprit avait un éclat, illuminant et brusque, une expression nette, brève et juste, une fantaisie, qui font penser aux plus séduisantes qualités de l'intelligence irlandaise. Ses mots n'étaient jamais de simples bons mots; par dessous cette verve heureuse on reconnaissait, en y réfléchissant, une observation riche et profonde, une remarquable faculté d'intuition psychologique s'y attestait, généralement appliquée plutôt qu'aux individus, aux caractères ethniques et nationaux des peuples que sa vie, tantôt errante, tantôt fixée en de longs séjours à l'étranger, lui avait permis d'étudier et de comparer si diversement. Sur l'Irlande, l'Angleterre, la Russie, l'Inde, la Turquie, la Grèce, il avait de petits anecdotes caractéristiques—sortes de faits—spécimens, à la façon

d'un Stendhal, d'un Taine, où se résume toute l'essence morale d'une nation. Pendant la Guerre Russo-Japonaise me revenaient souvent deux petits récits que j'avais entendu faire, plus de sept ans auparavant, par Sir Edward et qui m'expliquaient toute la psychologie, du côté russe, de cette guerre. L'un portait sur le caractère moral de beaucoup d'officiers russes—je préfère ne pas le raconter. L'autre montrait l'humble tenacité, la résignation à la peine et à l'effort, l'héroïque patience du moujik—c'est à dire du peuple et du soldat russe. Sir Edward était en traîneau, la nuit, en hiver, dans une steppe solitaire de Sibérie. Le cheval buta sur la neige et tomba. Sans doute le cocher—un jeune paysan—savait que sur cette surface glissante, il ne pourrait pas relever sa bête d'un coup de fouet. Sans un juron, sans un mot, sans hâte, il commença de la débrider. Comme les cordes et lanières du harnais étaient raidies par la gelée, pour les délier et les retirer des boucles il les rechauffait une à une de son haleine, il les frottait longuement entre ses paumes. Dans ce long travail nocturne, qu'il dût, une fois le cheval sur ses jambes, refaire en sens inverse, le froid du cuir et de l'acier devaient lui brûler les doigts; il n'eut pas un geste de fatigue ou d'impatience; il mena l'opération jusqu'au bout. Cependant, dans le traîneau, Sir Edward, enfermé dans sa pelisse, regardait et réfléchissait. L'intérêt pour lui d'un tel fait, c'était ce qu'il signifie de général. Il le grava dans sa mémoire parce qu'il voyait s'y résumer beaucoup de ses observations antérieures sur l'âme du paysan russe. Dans son esprit, ces exemples, ces spécimens ne devenaient pas les numéros dépouillés, inanimés, d'une collection de sociologue. Rien de plus coloré, de plus riche en accents, en détails individuels,

rien de plus évocateur et vivant, que ces anecdotes, présentées par Sir Edward. En général il arrivait tout de suite au dialogue direct, à la forme comique ou dramatique. Pour rendre quelque chose de l'impression que nous communiquait ce talent spontané, il faudrait retrouver non seulement le mouvement si direct et si preste de ces petits récits, mais le jeu de physionomie du conteur, la lumière dansante de l'œil, la finesse sinueuse de la bouche, toute l'expression mobile d'amusement et d'intelligente sympathie.

“Le trait le plus original, c'était l'union de ces qualités d'artiste et d'Irlandais avec la plus sérieuse, la plus belle tenue de *gentleman* anglais. C'était, je pense, un Irlandais dressé aux fermes et hautes disciplines de l'aristocratique éducation anglaise. Dans l'intimité sa figure s'animait d'*humour* et de plaisanterie, mais le geste chez lui restait toujours admirablement calme et retenu ; on sentait une force tranquille et sûre de *self-control*, une volonté entraînée de bonne heure à réprimer les impulsions des nerfs et de l'émotion. On devinait aussi, par dessous tant de verve prompte, de brillante fantaisie, un fonds de bonté attentive, une puissance de sentiment dirigée par une grande intelligence, surtout la gravité, l'ordre d'une âme qui n'a vécu que dans l'ordre, pour les devoirs qui font la certitude et la rectitude de sa vie. Là-dessous, chère Lady Law, vous savez tout ; je n'ai qu'un sentiment, mais il s'est fortifié chaque fois que j'ai revu Sir Edward.

“Telle est l'insuffisante image que j'ai conservé de cette noble figure ; agréez, je vous prie, l'expression de ce souvenir comme un témoignage de respect pour sa mémoire, et de sympathie profonde pour votre douleur.

“ANDRÉ CHEVRILLON.”

Law had in his lifetime expressed a wish to be buried in Athens ; his body, after being embalmed in Paris, was conveyed by train to Marseilles and thence by sea to the Piræus. Major Henderson, Law's nephew, accompanied Lady Law on this sad journey, and sent to his mother and the Misses Law, who had always been devotedly attached to their brother, the following account of the last scene :—

“Our voyage on the *Therapia* began very satisfactorily, in beautiful warm weather which lasted until we got to Messina. Nothing could exceed the sympathetic kindness of the German captain, Heyn by name. He did everything possible to ensure Kaity (Lady Law)'s comfort and privacy, and had partitioned off a portion of the baggage-room into a separate chamber with a private door of which he gave Kaity the key. Here the coffin was placed, covered with a Union Jack,¹ and Kaity had sole access to it at any hour of the day or night. It was a great comfort to her to be able to visit it whenever she wished. At Messina the weather changed, and it rained heavily all day on the 17th. . . . Instead of leaving Messina on the evening of the 17th, we stayed there until the afternoon of the 18th. As soon as we started, we ran into bad weather. . . . The lightning never ceased all night, and was the only relief to the intense darkness ; it blew from all quarters ; it rained ; it hailed enormous stones ; it thundered ; in fact, it did everything, so that we had to steam dead slow and keep the siren going. The result of all this was that instead of reaching the Piræus at 6 A.M. on the 20th, we did not get there till past noon. We were met

¹ Lady Law was much touched to find that a large Greek flag had also been hung at the head of the coffin.

by Kaity's brother and sister-in-law, and by several other intimate friends, who had left Athens before daylight and had been waiting at the Piræus ever since. They had made all arrangements, and everything went off smoothly. The coffin went direct to the English Church in Athens and remained there for the night.

"This morning I went with Kaity to the church at half-past ten, before the people began to arrive, though indeed there were a few there already. A great many wreaths were being brought in, most of them, according to Greek custom, being mounted on long poles in order that they may be carried like banners. I had ordered two, one 'de la famille Law' and the other for the Morisons. These, along with Kaity's and one or two others, were laid on the coffin. They were all very nice—rosebuds, white chrysanthemums, and quantities of beautiful violets. The large wreaths on poles were sent, for the most part, by public bodies, companies, &c.

"The people very soon began to arrive, and it was with great difficulty that space was kept for officials and others who had a claim to be present. The church is not large, and it very soon was thronged. Most of those who knew Kaity went up and paid their respects to her before taking their seats. Meanwhile a guard of honour and a considerable number of other troops arrived, and were drawn up in the street outside the church. It seems that the Grand Cross of the Saviour entitles the holder to a large escort, the strength of which is definitely fixed. As Uncle Edward was not actually a recipient of the decoration, a special decree had been issued, enacting that the same honours were to be paid as if he had been permitted to accept the cross when it was offered to him.

"I waited with Colonel Hatzanestis outside the church to receive the Crown Prince Regent and the Crown Princess, as did also Sir F. Elliot, who was representing King Edward. While we were waiting, a great number of officials arrived, to many of whom I was presented. All the Greek Ministers, with the exception of Theotokis, who is laid up with influenza; all the diplomatic representatives; and a great many others, military, commercial, and private. In fact, I am told that all classes were there; and Kaity was much touched by the presence of many who could only have come because they wished to honour and respect his memory.

"As soon as the Crown Prince and Princess arrived, the service began. It was short—two hymns: 'Day of wrath,' 'Now the labourer's task is o'er,' and the lesson. As soon as it was over the Prince and Princess went away, being the first to leave the church. Next Kaity, Hatzanestis, and myself went out. We stood outside the door whilst the whole congregation filed past us, every member of which paid his or her respect to Kaity. It is the Greek custom; but I thought it was terribly trying for Kaity, and I don't really know how the poor thing stood it, for it was a long ordeal, and she was standing all the time. Last of all the coffin was brought out and placed on the hearse; the wreaths were laid on it (the long ones on poles were carried in front); the troops got the order to march; and the procession started, while a salute of guns was fired. Kaity (on my arm) walked immediately behind the hearse. We walked thus for over a quarter of a mile, and then the carriages were brought up and we got into them and drove the rest of the way at a foot's pace, the troops still escorting the hearse. At

the entrance to the cemetery the troops were drawn up and presented arms; the coffin was lifted from the hearse and carried to the grave, and we followed on foot. At the vault the remainder of the service was read and the coffin was lowered, and then the Minister of Finance spoke a eulogy in Greek, which I believe expressed the gratitude felt by Greece to the friend who had stood by her in her darkest hour. Another salute of guns was fired when the coffin was lowered into the vault. I believe there were thirty-five guns in all.

“And so the end—the end!”

Other Englishmen who were present at the funeral confessed their inability to convey an adequate sense of the scenes which they witnessed, and of the extraordinary character of the tributes paid to Law. Greece could not have buried him with more honour if he had been one of the greatest of her sons as well as one of the foremost of her friends. Official Greece paid to his memory the highest mark of respect which it was in her power to show.

What was, however, more impressive than any official demonstration was the national mourning; a fortnight is a long time for any public to retain its interest in one item of contemporary life, and a fortnight had elapsed from the time the people of Greece heard of Law's death and the funeral, and yet the whole town was on foot; the small chapel crowded inside, outside, and all around. Many of the people who attended had known him but slightly, and others not at all. But they showed their sense of what was afterwards expressed in the newspapers, that Greece had lost not only an unswerving friend, but a frank and just critic. The article

published in the 'Neon Asty' on the day of the interment crystallised public feeling in the following words :—

"The man whose funeral is taking place to-day in the Greek capital, with the highest honours which the State can offer, was a friend of Greece—in the highest and purest sense of the word. Sir Edward Law never forgot that his country was the land of Byron and Canning, and he loved Greece with the devotion of a son. English born, he was a Greek at heart. As he felt for Greece, more than a Greek, he watched over her, advised her, and warned her."

Beside the grave, the Financial Minister, M. Gounaris, on behalf of the Greek Government, delivered a fine oration, from which the following sentences may be quoted :—

"In the name of the whole of Greece he so greatly loved, and on whose behalf he laboured so much, the Greek Government bids a last adieu to Sir Edward Law.

"For the small nations unfortunate in their historical career and fighting the arduous struggle of regeneration, it is a strong encouragement to have the sympathy of famous men of greater countries. They are attracted by the spell which the famous past of people since less favoured by destiny casts upon rare minds.

"Greatly moved by the loss of one whom we shall deeply miss, and paying our tribute of gratitude to the friend whose emphatic voice has always been heard on behalf of the rights of Greece, we address him the last adieu in the name of Greece, in whose glorious soil he wished to keep his eternal rest."

That these words were not the expression of an ephemeral sentiment is shown by the fact that a year after Law's death the Municipal Council of Athens decided unanimously, on the initiative of the Mayor, Mr Merkauris, that one of the central thoroughfares of the capital should be named "Edward Law Street."

How many Englishmen are there whose death would so profoundly stir popular feeling in a foreign capital? The majority of those whose names are oftenest in men's mouths at home might pass away without more comment abroad than a perfunctory paragraph in an obscure corner of the newspaper. Law belonged to that rare class who occupy a larger position in Europe than in England. This was only natural, as the best of his life's work had been done outside these islands. But his long residence in foreign countries, far from allaying the ardour of his patriotism, had added to it a yet warmer glow. He knew and loved England better than those who only England know, and it was as service of the Empire that his work abroad had value in his eyes. In whatever capacity he might chance to be serving, he felt that upon him rested the responsibility of making England loved and respected by the peoples among whom his lot was thrown. And when the soldiers fired their last salute over his Athenian grave, his wife knew that the desire of his life had not been denied him.

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